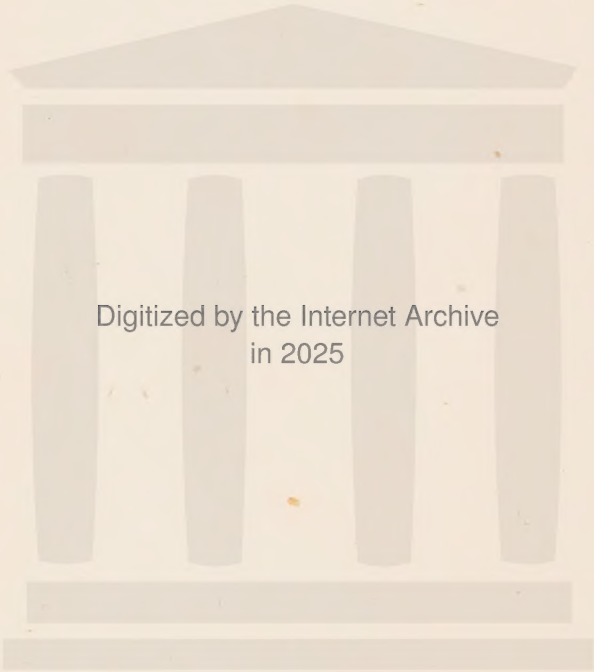
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PERCY LOCKHART.

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# PERCY LOCKHART;

## Or, the Hidden Will.

By FRANCIS WILLOUGHBY BAXTER.

*IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.*

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# *PERCY LOCKHART.*

## CHAPTER I.

Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.—HAMLET.

FLORENCE had been much struck both with Francis Savile's conversation and trains of thought. The variety of information which he possessed enabled him to pursue analogies and detect resemblances and affinities which opened up wide fields of speculation and thought. There was not the slightest touch of pedantry in all this. No subject ever appeared to be introduced for the sake of display, nor was any theme, however tempting, pursued a moment longer than what

appeared natural in easy conversation; so Florence listened to him with undisguised pleasure; but it was merely with the pleasure with which she would peruse an interesting book, and for a long time she was not conscious of the marked attention which he paid to her. By and by this became so apparent that it was impossible to remain in ignorance. When something like the truth flashed on her mind, for the first time the enlightenment was accompanied by the most painful sensation she had ever experienced. Flash followed flash in rapid succession. Many circumstances, which at the time of their occurrence had hardly claimed observation, now stood out in even magnified importance. Had others been as blind as she? or had they seen and been observing Savile's attention? Had she all this time been the object of those comments and speculations which such attentions never fail to

engender? Philip had always kept aloof when Savile was speaking with her, and of late his manner had appeared very different from what it had been. There was another light. Thoughts began to dawn upon her mind to which it had hitherto been a perfect stranger. She found herself in a maze of doubts and difficulties which had appeared with the suddenness of a magical apparition. So dazzled and bewildered was she by the discovery, that she felt almost incapable of deciding upon the course she ought to take.

Something must be done, and soon. She shuddered when she reflected with what pleasure she had listened to Savile's brilliant discourse, and was dismayed when she reflected upon the conclusions which he might have drawn from her ready attention to his eloquence and wit. She lost no time in rushing to the opposite extreme, so that

Savile was not long in being struck by the alteration in her conduct and manner. She carefully avoided him on every occasion where it was possible. When she could not, without rudeness, withdraw from his conversation, her manner was so constrained and so unlike what it had been, that she herself could not help witnessing the effect which the change had upon him. She was "perplexed in the extreme." The pure fountain of her life had been suddenly troubled by the infusion of new and strange elements—so strange and so new, that she looked upon them with a kind of horror. Her father hitherto had been the only living being who possessed an interest in her. It appeared that Savile was about to dispute his claim, and she regarded the attempt as something like the infraction of a sacred duty.

Savile was a man of the world, but he knew not at all what to think of the new

position of matters. His attentions had been so undisguised and pointed, that he thought he was warranted in the conclusion that Florence must have perceived them long ago, but up to a very recent period she had shown no disapprobation; on the contrary, she had evidently taken pleasure in his conversation, so that the coldness and constraint now were inexplicable. Had he been trifled with a second time? No, he acquitted her the instant the thought arose. There was not a shade of coquetry in that clear bright nature. Had he deceived himself a second time? He was twenty years older than he had been at the period of his first mistake, and he felt that he would be twenty times the fool he had been if he made another. But the folly was a secondary consideration,—it would soon be got over: it was the infatuation itself which he was alarmed at. How was he to deal with the

feelings which began to constitute to him a new existence, with the hopes which had again lighted up and revivified his whole being? He had again dared to play at the old game at which he had been so signally beaten. Was there to be another and a more signal defeat?

## CHAPTER II.

Jealousy's a proof of love;
But 'tis a weak and unavailing medicine.

DRYDEN.

AND so three men, of very different temper and disposition, had been attracted far beyond ordinary measure by the bright vision which had appeared so suddenly and unexpectedly before them. Poor Hay had endeavoured with all his might to make himself appear as like his rivals as possible in point of education and information. The result was what might have been expected, total failure. It would have been laughable to have witnessed his desperate attempts at self-improvement, had not the poor fellow's happiness been so deeply pledged in the

object of his pursuit. We have seen the result of his ill-judged attempts, and we may at present leave him, wishing him success in his new career. A red coat buttoned over the heart has very often been resorted to as a cure for its sorrows, and perhaps in this case it may prove effectual. Philip Charteris was in some sense a proud man. As soon as he suspected the designs of Hay and Savile, he had ceased to show any particular attention to the object which engrossed his whole soul. On the contrary, where he could do so without ostentation, he kept aloof from Florence, though he felt that the more he did so the more irresistibly was his attention fixed to the spot where she happened to be. A tone of her voice, a light laugh, or sudden motion, would almost startle him out of his forced reserve. He did not allow himself for a moment to feel indignant at Florence's conduct, for she had a right to encourage

any one she chose; but he resolved more than once to withdraw from her society altogether, and to travel, as Sir Robert had often urged him to do before he became too deeply interested in one who had hitherto shown no interest in him. But apparently he found some difficulty in carrying his resolve into execution; for day after day preparations for departure were delayed, until the idea seemed to be almost abandoned, at least for a time.

Chance threw Florence and him together one day while he was in this mood. A hawking party had been proposed, and the novelty of the thing had brought together a goodly company on the moor. Some care had been taken by those who pretended to understand the matter to procure good falcons and proper falconers; but,—whether from the faults of the birds or their keepers, we know not,—the whole thing turned out a

thorough failure. It was no difficult thing to find a heron in that spot; but when found, and in the air, it soared away one way, and falcon after falcon in another, the very absurdity of the failure producing that amusement which the sport had failed to do. The party broke up, and, somehow or other, Philip found himself riding in the direction homewards with Florence Warren. She was looking very lovely. The exercise and excitement of the scene had given a bloom and animation to her countenance which Philip trembled to look upon, knowing how deeply he was becoming intoxicated at every glance. Wholly unaware of the wild work which she was making in that stout heart, she rode gaily on, talking of the occurrences of the morning.

"I am very glad the hawks behaved so ill," said she. "I think, from all the descriptions I have read of falconry, it is a cruel sport. Don't you think so?"

"I suspect all sport is more or less so," answered Philip.

"Yes; but I think this is especially cruel. The poor quarry, as it is called, is so completely cut off from all chance of escape: nothing but the expanse above him—the wild hawk driving him still farther up—every wheel he makes bringing him nearer to destruction—men and horses careering below him, and rejoicing in every exhibition of his agony, till he makes his desperate plunge. I am very glad, indeed, that the falcons behaved so ill to-day. Besides, I have a special favour for the heron."

> "So stiff and stilly,
> Like crested sentinel
> Watching the water-lily,"

said Philip.

"Yes, I would much rather see him watching the water-lily than in the talons of his fierce enemy."

"I know not how it is," said Philip, "but the love of sport, cruel as it often is, seems to animate the most benevolent of men. I know no man with a kinder heart than my father, and I know no keener sportsman. I must confess to the infatuation myself. I know few things more exhilarating than to sally out on a fine, bracing September morning, with gun and dogs, with the purpose of shooting a few harmless birds, the most timid of their kind. One of our greatest English writers has chosen to represent the kindest and most benevolent heart known in fiction as belonging to an enthusiastic soldier, whose great delight in his declining years was in fighting his battles over again. I must shelter myself behind the reasoning of Uncle Toby. *It is born with us.* One of the first great feats of a boy is to shoot a sparrow or catch a trout. From sparrows and trouts he ascends to

partridges, blackcock, hares, red-deer, salmon, and *men;* and the more civilized men become, the fonder do they become of such excitement. The wild Indian hunts for his subsistence, the gentlemen of England for the pleasure of killing their game. It is the original wild nature, which must have play one way or other. You know it is said we never lose altogether the characteristics of our ancestors. Nimrod and his race seem to have come down to the nineteenth century."

"Well," said Florence, "I am an unworthy descendant, for I feel not a spark of the mighty hunter's spirit."

"But Mr. Warren has a few sparks," said Philip, "and not a few."

"Well, I suppose I must inherit; but I am quite unconscious of their possession; and I think—but," pulling up her horse, "where are we riding to? We have lost the road."

"So we have," said Philip, pretending a little surprise; "but it will be easily found again. We are not far from the Witches' Stone, where Mr. Warren and I met so unexpectedly with shelter and assistance in the snow-storm. Will you ride on a few hundred yards and see it?"

"By all means," said Florence. In a short time, they were in the vicinity of the huge shapelessness. It was singular enough, there was not a more solitary spot in the county, but Philip again found the place inhabited. As the horses' feet announced their approach, the quick challenging bark of a dog was heard, and a large handsome setter rushed out from behind the stone. He was immediately called back by his master, who, in his turn, appeared.

It was Savile.

He had been shooting, and chosen the shady side of the block for a few minutes'

shelter from the heat of the sun. His gun and game-bag lay on the ground, where he had been sitting. There was no cause for embarrassment, — there was surely nothing very extraordinary in the position of the three; but somehow all three felt a little confused. Savile was the first to assume perfect self-possession, though he was the most disturbed of the party, but his self-command was almost perfect; and the first hasty greetings over, not a trace of embarrassment appeared.

"Ah," said he, with a perfectly successful attempt at unaffected pleasantry; "this is as agreeable a surprise as it is unexpected, to use a very new and unhackneyed phrase."

"We were at the hawking meeting," said Philip, quietly; "and it turned out, as you predicted, a perfect failure. Falcons and falconers seemed equally ignorant of their business, so the company lost their sport.

In riding homewards, we chanced to stray from the direct road."

"It must have been an interesting conversation, indeed, to cause you to mistake the road! I regret not having heard it!"

Savile had made a rude and a vulgar speech, and he was instantly aware of it; but it was too late. The colour of Florence's cheek became still deeper. Philip answered with perfect composure,—

"You have nothing to regret, for you shall hear every word of it."

"I have made a very rude and impertinent remark," said Savile, with great frankness; "I ask forgiveness of you both."

It was instantly accorded.

"And now," said Philip, "you shall hear our conversation."

"Confirm my pardon by not alluding to the cause of the offence,"—and the cloud passed over.

Philip then explained the cause of their visit to the Witches' Stone. "It was," said he, "the scene of a small adventure, which procured me the pleasure of Mr. Warren's acquaintance."

Savile expressed a wish to hear the circumstances, and Philip, in a few words, related the adventure.

"It was an awkward situation, certainly," was Savile's remark. "I was once similarly situated on the Great St. Bernard, when I was rescued from considerable danger by accident, or what appeared to be so. But I detain you," he continued; "your horses are impatient to be off. I wish you a pleasant ride."

It was, in a manner, dismissing them, so they took leave, courteously enough, and galloped off.

Savile followed them with his eyes until their figures became indistinct in the distance, and then he sat down and covered his face with his hands, as if to shut out some

hideous vision. There was one consolation; Philip's offer to repeat the conversation between Florence and him showed that nothing had passed between them to give him alarm; but still he sat in the same position, and mused long and painfully. His attention was aroused by the dog licking his hands. The animal looked with her large melancholy eyes into her master's face, as if to learn the cause of his grief. There was an expression of almost human sympathy in her gaze; but when Savile patted her on the head and spoke to her, she bounded joyfully away, as if inviting him to resume the sport, which she liked better than her master did.

"Ay, Blanche," said he, "thou art a type of thy sex—easily grieved and easily pleased; but no more sport to-day, lass. Let us home;" and he walked slowly to the nearest village, where he had put up his horse.

## CHAPTER III.

When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions.—As You Like It.

It was upon a brilliant autumn day that Florence sat alone in the garden, in a small harbour which Sam had insisted upon constructing, and which, to say the truth, reflected much credit on his taste. A book was open beside her, but neither arbour nor book seemed to occupy her attention. Her thoughts must have been sad to cloud that clear brow and dim that sparkling eye; but a sculptor would have liked the figure as it was now better than when animated with all the happiness which seemed to belong to one so lovely. Her thoughts were not so much occupied as to render the ear un-

watchful, for the first distant clank of a horse's hoof aroused that pensive form. She started up as if to retreat to the cottage; but on second thoughts the intention was abandoned, and she again sat down, no longer pensive and abstracted, but with that lofty and determined look which, when combined with perfect purity and innocence, gives all of Divinity that mortal presence can wear in mortal sphere. She knew the clank of the hoof, and who rode the horse. Every one has an instinctive feeling when deeply moved of approaching events, and she heard the gradually increasing sound of Savile's horse with as perfect a knowledge that he was the rider as if she had seen him in bodily form. Ay, she knew the horse would stop there; and she knew, too, that in a minute she would hear footsteps on the way to the arbour; and she knew she had a duty to perform, and she *thought* she was ready.

The footsteps came near, slow and regular, like those of a man measuring his distance to some point of action. Savile appeared. Florence greeted him with some discomposure, for she knew that the time was come.

Savile seated himself at some distance from her, and entered at once on the subject of his visit.

"I have done something to offend you of late, Miss Warren?"

"No."

"You have made some sudden discovery, then, connected with me, which has lessened me in your opinion?"

"Why should you think so?"

"You can scarcely ask the question for information. Well, I shall answer it at once, because your manner to me is so much changed,—you must be quite aware of it yourself."

"Mr. Savile, this conversation distresses

me very much; but I can assure you that you have done nothing to offend me—nothing whatever; and—forgive me, but I wish you would change the subject."

Savile shook his head. "I must persist, even should the subject distress you. If I have not offended you, is it too much to ask the reason of your great change of manner towards one who has been as studiously respectful to you as one human being can be to another? You are not capricious. There is a reason. It is with all respect that I shall hear it, whatever it may be."

Florence felt much distressed, but she thought that he had no right to question her in that manner, and she said something to that effect.

"I know not that," answered Savile, with some spirit. "When a friend suddenly appears to shun a friend, I think the man

who is shunned has a right to ask the reason. I do not see even why a lady should refuse so reasonable a satisfaction. But I can conceive why my question embarrasses you, and also why you can hardly answer it. Well, I shall put the matter in another form. Allow me to say that I have seldom, in the course of my life, experienced so much pleasure as in the few brief months during which I have had the honour of your acquaintance. Nay, hear me for a very short time, and then, if you choose, I shall have done for ever. I sought your society with the view of securing it permanently for myself. Forgive me for saying that I can hardly think you could be blind to the feelings which I entertained towards you, and I am presumptuous enough to conclude that your continuing to allow me to indulge in them was something like an acknowledgment that they were not displeasing to you.

I see, however," exclaimed he, suddenly, as he witnessed the unfeigned astonishment and distress of Florence, "that I have been much mistaken, and I need say no more."

Florence was greatly embarrassed, but she compelled herself to speak.

"I have never been so much distressed, Mr. Savile. I feel that I must, however undesignedly, have acted imprudently in not denying myself the pleasure of your conversation, for I will not deny that it was a pleasure; but I never, until very lately indeed, imagined that — that — Mr. Savile, do excuse me, I am very inexperienced, and quite unable to continue this conversation."

"Enough, Miss Warren. My dream is at an end; I shall never offend you more. I take my leave of you for ever."

Florence was much moved by the deep, quiet grief which Savile exhibited. "Do not say that!" she exclaimed. "Can we not

be friends as we were before this—this unfortunate misunderstanding? Forget what you justly call a dream, and treat it like a dream, indeed, as I shall do. You said the other day we do not live in the days of romance."

"No," answered Savile, a little bitterly, "assuredly not, when the young maiden lectures the grave man on the dreams of youth. It is certainly not the age of romance."

"I have hurt you, Mr. Savile," said Florence. "You must know it was far from my intention."

"It was not your intention. I have been very blind, and have stumbled and fallen. That is all. Do not wonder that I am hurt —not in my pride, I assure you, for I shall never think it shame to have felt as I have felt, or to let it be known; but I cannot treat stern reality like idle dreams, and I cannot

go to sleep and forget. I shall not prolong this conversation. I see that you wish it at an end. Farewell!" He bowed respectfully, and retired.

Florence was deeply grieved at the evident pain which she had so unintentionally caused. It was one of her first lessons in the serious things of life, showing her we can hardly take a step in the complicated walks of society without influencing, for good or for evil, the direction of others. She had hitherto imagined that she had to live only for her father and herself—the only world to which she belonged, or to which she was accountable. She had never dreamed of influencing the feelings of others, or of being influenced by them, and her eyes were suddenly and painfully opened to new duties, and risks, and fears, and responsibilities—the taxes one pays for mixing with society and enjoying its benefits and pleasures. She

almost wished that she had remained in that seclusion which Warren had at first determined on preserving.

Savile felt a kind of relief when he arrived again at his own wild retreat. A beautiful day was followed by one of the wildest nights ever experienced in that district. The thunder burst over the Grange as if menacing its inhabitants with destruction. Savile walked to the library-window and looked out on the storm. The blue landscape revealed by the lightning, like glimpses of another world—the imperial element tearing the dark mantle of the night with a roar like "the shout that rent hell's conclave." The rain, backed by the wind, charged the old house till the windows and doors rattled again. Savile was thinking of another stormy night, when he had ridden through the storm and rain, when cheated out of hope and happiness. Twenty years had

passed over his head since that time, and here he was again beaten. The storm continued to rage without, and Savile almost wished for a wild ride in it. There was wild enough work at hand.

The bell at the hall-door was hastily pulled. "Some one caught in the storm," thought he. The door was opened, and there was a short parley. A light footstep approached the library-door. It was opened, and unannounced a tall female figure entered. She shut the door behind her, and approached to the place where Savile was standing, a little puzzled to account for the singular visit at such an hour and in such a night. The stranger's dress was dripping with the rain, for she had been obliged to walk for about a quarter of a mile, the carriage-way having been blocked up by the fall of a large tree during the storm. She approached till within a few feet of Savile, and then stood quite

still. He knew who it was, and his astonishment was great; but he looked calm and composed, and waited for her to open the conversation.

"So you recognize me, Francis?"

"Julia Beverly!"

"Yes, Julia Beverly once, Julia Beverly no more. But there is no time to lose with those old sounds, for sounds they are, and nothing more. I came here on serious business; of course, you say nothing but serious business could bring me here. But it must rest for a moment. I suspect there is more serious business near you. I think you are in danger."

"I in danger—of what?"

"I may be mistaken, but as I approached your door, I saw by the glare of the lightning several figures coming from the brushwood towards the house. I waited for another flash, looking in the same direction.

In a few seconds it came, but the figures had disappeared. They had seen me, and hidden themselves."

"And you saw no more of them?"

"No; I walked as quickly as I could to the house."

"How many do you think there were?"

"I cannot tell; three or four, perhaps. I had merely the glance of an instant."

"Smugglers, probably," said Savile; "many of them come this way; but they have hitherto done no harm—at least to me."

"It may be so," said Julia.

"Well, then, to business," said Savile; "but first lay aside that wet cloak, and I shall order a fire." Savile was surprised at himself feeling and talking so calmly to one who at one time had commanded the strongest passions of his soul.

A knock at the door. On Savile speaking, his servant entered,—a strong man, of about

fifty years of age. He entered the library without ceremony. "Blucher's dead!" was his brief intimation. Blucher was a large and fierce Newfoundland dog. "And Blanche is dying!"

"Poisoned?" inquired Savile.

"Poisoned!" said Pierre,—that was the servant's name.

"You are right," said Savile, addressing Julia. "There is danger. There will be an attack on this solitary house, and the robbers have poisoned the dogs." He told Pierre what Julia had seen. "But how could they do it, Pierre? The wild Newfoundland would let no stranger come near him."

"The boy, sir; the orphan boy whom you hired to help me. He has been bought by the thieves, and done their work for them. He disappeared about two hours ago, and has not been heard of since."

"I dare say it has been the boy, poor thing!" said Savile; "he has been tempted."

"Poor thing!" said Pierre; "I wish I had the poor thing in these hands!"

"I regret," said Savile, turning to Julia, "I regret you are here, especially as this attack will prevent me from hearing the business you have come upon. We must be brief. Pierre and I are the only men in the house. It is no work for ladies. What shall we do, Pierre? This is quite in your way."

Pierre thought for a moment. "If they have seen the lady, they will be scared for a time. I shall reconnoitre." And asking the lady where she had seen them, as near as she could describe, he left the apartment.

Julia and Savile were left alone. He made her throw off her wet cloak, and insisted on her putting on a warm fur pelisse. They waited in silence. It was no time for even serious business.

Pierre left the house cautiously, letting himself out by a window on the other side from that on which Julia had seen the men. Having gone round and listened for a few minutes, he got down on the ground and crawled away like a snake. Even in the roar of the storm he had heard voices which belonged not to the storm. He was not long in being at the place of conference. It was a clump of underwood, and Pierre crawled within a few yards of the robbers, and listened. They were disputing about the arrival of the stranger.

"Who can it be at such a time?" said a rough voice.

"It is awful unlucky, whoever it is," said another. "What can he want?"

"It was a woman, I tell you," said a third speaker. "I saw her well enough, and she saw us, which is worse." She stood to get a second look, when we ducked amongst the

whins. But what about it? We are four men to two men and two women, even though they take the alarm. Let us wait, however, till they go to roost, and then we can do the thing quietly, for it must be done now or never. They'll know that the dogs have been physicked, and that will put the cunning Canadian on his guard." Pierre was a Canadian.

"Where can that cursed imp of a boy be? We don't know the house without him, or where the best of the swag lies. If he don't come, where shall we enter the house?"

"By one of the library-windows; the fastenings are crazy, and it is farthest from the bedrooms, and the governor is always there latest. When the light disappears, he will have gone to turn in for the night."

"But you say he sits woundy late at night."

"Then there is nothing for it but to shoot

him, and fight the Canadian if he will not hear reason. Not a man of us is known hereabout."

"No blood, if I am to assist at the job," said one who had not yet spoken. "I have had enough of that already."

"Ay, enough to make you be quiet and do as we bid you," said the man who seemed to be the leader.

"What!" said another; "chicken-hearted Joe! You will turn Methodist next."

Pierre had heard enough; he disappeared as unobserved as he had appeared.

He went to the library, and related what he had heard.

"What do you propose, Pierre?"

"It is easy enough; put out the light, let them come to the window, and then we can shoot them down like vermin, as they poisoned the dogs."

"No, that must not be. You must go

upstairs," addressing Julia, "and I have no doubt that Pierre and I shall be able to deal with the ruffians. I am well armed," said he, taking a pair of pistols from the mantelpiece; "so is Pierre. With the advantage of our position, and knowing their plans, the robbers will have very little chance if it come to actual fighting, which I am almost sure it will not. We shall let them approach the window, and then show that we are prepared for them: there is no chance of their proceeding farther."

"Well," said Julia, "your plan may be a very good one, but I shall remain here. It is of no use trying to persuade me to retire. You know I was a self-willed girl. The woman is as obstinate as the girl was. Give me a pistol!"

"You!"

"You forget we were wont to shoot at a mark in your father's garden."

"I forgot," said Savile; and he loaded a pistol, which he gave to her. "I know you fear nothing."

"Nothing of this kind," was the answer.

"I must insist upon one thing, however," said Savile; "you must withdraw behind that screen in the corner, so as to be out of sight, and you must keep out of sight, if possible."

"Agreed," answered Julia; "an ambush is sometimes better than open defence."

Pierre had procured a dark lantern, which was carefully masked—all the other lights were extinguished. An hour elapsed, and no appearance of the enemy. The Canadian peered through an opening in the window-curtains, but even his sharp eyes could detect nothing. The storm continued to rage as wild as ever—a choice night for burglary and murder! Another half hour passed away, still there was nothing to be seen. Pierre

became impatient and more watchful than ever. He wished to go out again to reconnoitre, but Savile objected.

Suddenly the Canadian turned from the window and listened. "They are in the house," whispered he; "they have changed their plans. That cursed boy has been with them since I heard them, and has let them in at the kitchen-door. They are here!" So saying, he made a spring to secure the library-door. He was too late. The door was opened. Julia, at a sign from Savile, had retired behind the screen.

A short, square built man, with a light in his hand, appeared, and three behind him, their faces covered with crape. When they saw Savile and Pierre they stopped.

"Advance one step," said Savile, cocking his pistol, "and you are a dead man!"

The robber advanced, unappalled; Savile raised his pistol, and fired. The detonating

powder in the cap exploded, and that was all. The charge had been drawn.

"The orphan boy again!" said Pierre. And instead of trying his own pistol, he seized a large heavy ruler which lay on a table, with which he felled the robber to the ground.

Two of the men were about to retreat, when the third cried, "We must go through with it now; that fellow," pointing to the man on the ground, "will peach if we get him not away. Stand, you cowards, or I'll blow your brains out myself!"—and the men obeyed.

"Hark ye," continued the man, addressing Savile; "let us take our comrade away, and we shan't harm you. We shall go clear off, and leave you alone."

"No," answered Savile, "I shall keep the man prisoner. Keep back, Pierre!" But while endeavouring to restrain the Canadian from advancing upon the robber, the latter

fired his pistol, and Savile fell. He then took aim at Pierre, when Julia appeared.

"Hold!" she exclaimed; and the man turned to see from whom the voice proceeded. There was a tall figure in a light dress, for Julia had thrown aside the pelisse. In the obscure shady light she appeared like a spirit come to the rescue. The man paused for an instant, while Julia, with a steady hand, raised the pistol and shot him dead. The other two robbers, who had no fire-arms, immediately took to flight.

Savile was mortally wounded, and he knew it. Pierre supported his head, while Julia knelt beside him.

"And now, Julia, tell me the business which brought you here. I have not much time."

"Oh, not now!" exclaimed the frantic woman.

"Yes, now; grant my last request."

"Your brother is ruined, and I came here unknown to him to ask your assistance. I came to ask from you, whom I—"

"Hush," said Savile faintly; "he shall have assistance. In a few minutes he shall have all I possess, with the exception of an annuity to Pierre. Poor Pierre! he saved my life once."

"I wish ruin had come in its worst form," cried Julia, "ere it had been avoided thus."

"I believe you," said Savile. "Farewell, Julia!—farewell, Pierre!" This was the second time he had used the word that day. It was the last time!

So Francis Savile slept in peace, and the Grange was again deserted!

## CHAPTER IV.

Dolce far niente.

Warren and Sam were up among the hills on a fishing excursion for a few days, far away from towns, and crowds, and civilized life, roughing it in a shepherd's cottage. Sam was invaluable on excursions of this kind,—creating comfort and plenty in the most unpromising places, and lighting up the dreariest abodes with a cheerfulness that never failed him. The sport had not come up to his descriptions and anticipations; so one day they took a stretch of about a dozen miles, to a stream where, he said, if they did not get fish it would be their own fault. It was a fine stream, at some places deep and

swollen, at others rapid and brawling. They lost no time in setting to work, and both had tolerable success; still neither of them had caught a fish above half a pound in weight, and this was rather below what Sam's description had warranted Warren in expecting. He hinted as much to Sam, who was looking attentively at some air bubbles which were floating past him; again and again they appeared, and at last Sam made up his mind.

"There 's something goin' on up the water," said he, "no far from us; it may be worth while to go and see. Come, sir, let us tak a stap up by, an' we 'll, maybe, meet in wi' something worth the pains."

They proceeded cautiously up the stream, keeping well back, according to Sam's anxious recommendation, till he heard the well-known plunge of trout feeding on the May-fly. It was in a deep pool, and,

creeping within sight, Sam saw two large trout tumbling up every few seconds, and feeding luxuriously—one about fifteen yards below the other.

It was as lonely a spot as ever gladdened the eye of a fisher. A bold rapid current broke in at the upper end of the pool, shooting straight down the middle of it for about fifteen or twenty yards, and then fringing away in large sweeping tumults, heaving and weltering, as if moved by some mysterious paroxysm in the depths below. Swirling eddies swept up by the edge of the current in counter rivalry to its course, while farther down the motion scarcely moved the reeds and rushes, among whose roots the greedy pike kept his garrison with a watchful eye to what was passing his door. The May-fly floated lazily down for a few yards, to disappear in a sudden splash, in which a quick eye might detect the golden

armour of the destroyer. The lower part of the pool was hemmed by pure white sand. An alder bush stood on each side of the water, which was tenanted by water-hens, whose sole business and amusement seemed to be to go from one bush to the other, the transit being performed with "a squatter" and disturbance altogether uncalled for by the importance of the occasion.

Sam had carefully drawn back as soon as he saw the state of matters, signing to Warren to follow his example. "Weel, sir," said he, "there 's twa fish worth some trouble; an' I think we can mak sure o' them baith; but we maun tak care no' to fley them; and troth it 's no' that easy keepin' oot o' sicht wi' thae bare banks, but creep on cannily, as if you were stappin' on eggs—gang nae nearer the water than you can help. Mind, a still clear pool is no' like a stream; you maun tak ten times the care in fishin' it. Stap cannily

in, and drap your fly the moment you're within reach; he'll rise at the first cast." Warren did as he was desired, and dropped his fly very gently. The trout rose almost as it touched the water, but he turned from it with a splash of his tail, and sank again to the bottom. Warren was about to try another cast, but Sam immediately whispered to him to come back.

"He saw you, and he disna like you; gie him time to recover his fricht; he canna resist feedin' in a day like this, an' he 'll no' leave his place; time eneugh to try him again when you hear him beginnin' to plowter; but you maun be mair cunnin' this time, an' no' gang whaur he can see you when he rises. Judge by the ripples he maks when he rises, and cast as near him as you can."

There was a silence for about five minutes. Then the noise of the trout feeding again commenced. Warren looked at Sam, who

merely gave an encouraging sign with his head, and then Warren approached, but not so near as before. He dropped his fly, which was seized the instant it touched the water; and away went the trout, making the reel whirr with a noise which none but a fisher understands the music of.

"That 's richt," said Sam; "he 's far doon the water; lat him rin as far as he likes doon the pool; he'll no' disturb his neebor up by." The fish made furious play, springing out of the water with desperate attempts to get free; but Warren had a fine hand, and easily kept the control until his prey was nearly exhausted. After some trouble, the fish permitted itself to be slowly drawn to the side of the stream, where Sam, ready with the landing-net, lifted him safely to land. He was a very fine fish, about two pounds in weight, sparkling with diamonds and gold.

"And noo," said Sam, "I'll try my hand at the other." He cautiously dropped his fly, he hooked his fish at the first cast, and it was secured with very little trouble. It was even a finer fish than the other.

"We'll mak nae mair o' this pool for some time," said Sam; "but there's nae sayin', the places whare thae twa fish were feedin' will very sune be filled up. They're just like men, and they're ay on the look oot for the best berths, and the biggest and strongest get them. It's a great thing to ken the best berths on a water; it saves a great deal o' useless whuppin'. I think we'll shift our ground, an' gang doon for a mile or so. There's the Witches' Pool, and the Plague Pool, an' the Horn, a' prime places, and we have a' the water to oursells."

But arrived at the spot recommended, they were disappointed. After a few casts, both Warren and Sam gave it up. "There's

something in the air," said Sam, "an' for miles not a trout will be seen risin'. Od, they're queer dorty brutes, trouts, and they tak the dorts a' at the same time. I often think they are better judges o' the weather than onything which lives in the open air. Fegs, the swallows are beginning to think that something's the matter too, and the reek o' yon cottage is licken the ground, and the water's like glass! Saul, we'll catch it! Craigowl has got on his bonnet, too. We'll better be stirren, sir. I ken a hoddy-hole whaur we'll be a' richt,"—and Sam led the way briskly for about half a mile, to what he called his hoddy-hole.

And a snug place it was. It was a kind of cave, or rather large hole in the solid rock, capable of containing half a dozen people. There was a rude stone seat at the inner end, and the ground was covered with dry withered reeds and rushes. It was quite

weather-proof, and they reached it just in time. Large drops of rain began to fall, and the sky was one troubled mystery of shifting masses, scowling on hill and stream and tree. Warren looked with an artist's eye on the working of the elements; Sam with an indifference which a life's exposure to their fury had induced.

They were comfortably seated in their retreat, from which they could look out on the rain and hail and the quivering light, as secure as in a palace.

"This is no' that ill a place in a storm," said Sam. "I like it better than bigget wa's. I've sleepit here mony a time, rowed in my plaid, listenin' to the wind roarin' an' the rain plashin', an' thinkin' mysel' just like a wild beast,—a fox, or a badger, or a bear, or something o' that natur'. Od, I think I was meant to be a beast, an' live in a hole o' this kind, whaur there's nae gaugers, nor taxes,

nor prisons, nor judges, nor justices, that they worry folks' lives oot wi' in toons. But a toon 's little better than a muckle prison. Can you tell me, sir, what gars folk live in toons that can afford to live oot o' them?"

"Why," answered Warren, laughing at Sam's question, "some people would think it very miserable to be here just now, and would think themselves very fortunate to be in any town in the kingdom."

"The like o' that!" exclaimed Sam; "the puir blindit creaturs! There 's as muckle difference as between a larrick (lark) in a cage and a larrick in the clud (cloud)."

"But I 've heard larks singing very sweetly in their cages."

"Ow, ay—folks have been heard singin' when they were to be burnt or hangit," said Sam, not particularly admiring Warren's remark; "but it hasna the grand lilt o' liberty that we hear in the open air."

"Well," persisted Warren, "some of the finest songs I have ever heard from larks have been in the dingy streets of London. I've heard the birds making the dull houses ring with their finest and fullest tones."

"Dinna say that, sir, dinna say that; it wasna singin'—it wasna that. It was some desperate remembrance o' the green fields whaur they should hae been—o' the fresh riggs whaur their young anes should hae been lyin' amang the saft clover. It wasna singin', sir; it was prisoners shoutin' for their liberty, which they couldna get; it was puir, ill-used things roarin' to Heaven to set them free, an' gie them the use o' their wings and their natural richts—their ain sweep o' the sky, and their nest in the tufty heather."

"You may be right, Sam," said Warren, wishing to humour his companion, who

certainly had poetry on his side of the argument.

"An' what mak's men live in toons when they can help it, mair than larricks, I canna imagine," continued Sam. "Sittin' at desks and in chawmers an' shops; even judges in their goons an' fur tippets, puir things, the best o' them. Od, I could pity them, wi' a' their grandeur."

"But judges only sit for a short time," said Warren. "I believe the most of them are too glad to get to the country when their work is over."

"There noo," said Sam, in all the triumph of a dialectician, who has detected an important admission by his adversary. "They 're glad to get awa' when they can. Od, I thocht a' yon goon an' tippet business was a forced wark! I dare say deil ane o' them wid sit on yon weary benches, as they ca' them, if they kent how

snug they micht be here, smokin' a pipe, an' lookin' at the tumlin cluds an' the roarin' linn."

"I fancy you are not far wrong, Sam; at least, for my own part, I would rather be here than on the benches you mention."

"I raythor think," said Sam, "I raythor think you are lauchin' at me an' my country-fied notions; you're just playin' me like a troot, an' seein' how muckle nonsense is in me, giein' me line an' lattin' me loup, kennin' a' the time you're to bag me at last."

"And what brings me to the hill and the stream and the wild heather, if I did not like them? They are my oldest friends and companions, Sam; I've sat on this old stone and looked at the storm thirty years ago, and it makes me a boy to sit again and look as I do now. There's the scalp of old Craig Dhu, and there's the smuggler's spang. I've

shot blackcock on that hill where the dark cloud is darkest, and stalked the red deer up the Corrie on its side; but all that was in the days o' lang syne, Sam."

"Od, but I 'm glad you 're no' toonbred," said Sam; "I jaloused when I saw you busk the hare's lug at my cottage yon day that you kent mair aboot things than you let on; and me to be telling you a' aboot the places here, and their names, and the havers aboot them, while you kent them a' as weel as mysel', an' better, maybe!"

"It was very pleasant to hear about the old things; the names sounded to me like a pleasant dream, and it is like a dream to be amongst them all again. There 's nothing like the highland hills, and highland heather to a Scotchman."

"And so you gie up the toon birds and the judges an' the justices, an' a' that kind o' cattle?" said Sam.

"Entirely," answered Warren; "but now let us see what is in the wallet; we may as well have our dinner while the rain lasts." And Sam produced a repast, which, seasoned by the mountain air, rendered an alderman's feast a very secondary affair.

Sam was highly delighted to learn that Warren was a Scotsman. He was a little curious to know his family and rank; but he was quite well aware of the indelicacy of asking questions on such matters, and contented himself with a very far-off allusion. "Weel," said he, "I'm glad you're no a cockney."

"Why so, Sam?"

"Why! just because they're puir, ignorant conceited creaturs, the best of them," was Sam's ready answer.

"Have you been much among them, Sam?"

"Me! na; I was never in Lunnan, and I am never like to be."

"Then how do you know so well about it?"

"How do I know?" said Sam, pausing a little. "Ow, a'body says the same thing; an' what a'body says is geyin aften true."

"And very often false. By everybody, I suppose, you mean a few Scotch people, who sit in judgment on their southern neighbours, and who know as much about them as the men in the moon, if there be any."

"Dear, sir, you canna deny that they're no' the least like Scotch folk?"

"Not the least," said Warren, laughing; "but if by cockneys you mean the inhabitants of London—"

"Ow, just that."

"Then, Sam, you are labouring under a mistake—a very general one in our country. Conceit, Sam, which you have attributed to the cockney, is the sin which doth most easily beset us Scotsmen. I think what you

term cockneys are a very clever and intelligent people."

"Ow, as for that, nae doot; but you'll maybe be sayin' next that they can shoot, an' fish, an' ride."

"Yes, most certainly; I have seen cockneys shoot, and fish, and ride to hounds,—and, in fact, I have seen them engaged in all manly sports and exercises; and I think, Sam, as far as I am able to judge, if they have any equals, they have no superiors."

"That's a new doctrine to me," said Sam, in a tone which denoted anything but conviction; "but I mind about a rather clever Birkie that had made a power o' money at what's ca'd the Stock Exchange—a queer place, whaur you sell things when you have naething to sell, and buy things you never see or get haud o'. This chap spoke as if the walth of Lunnan was at his command. I met him at the water whiles, an' he was na

that hieland at the wark after a'. Weel, he had persuaded an uncle to join in some speculations, and blew in his lug that he wid be rich in nae time; instead o' that, he lost every penny o' his ain an' his uncle's forbye. Aff he went, an' the first news we heard o' him, puir thing, was that he had *put hands on himsel* rather than meet his creditors."

"Well, I had some of your ideas when I first went to London, but, I assure you, I was very soon undeceived. A man hardly knows mankind who has not resided some time in the great city; and he certainly does not know himself."

"And," said Sam, continuing his Socratic method; "you'll be sayin' that Englishmen are as cute and book-learned in general as Scotsmen."

"In general, yes. Our parish schools have raised the lower part of the Scotch

population; but in the higher classes, the educated Englishmen are superior to the Scotch."

"I would like to hear you mak oot that," said Sam, far from thinking of giving in.

"A wiser man than I, and a Scotsman too, has done it already. He says there never was a Scotsman to compare with Milton, Shakespeare, Bacon, or Newton."

"I wadna gie Robbie Burns for a dizzin o' them," said Sam, sturdily.

"Very likely, Sam; but the rest of the world is not of your opinion. The Englishman in general is a better animal than the Scotsman, Sam. He has better blood."

"He 's better fed, the gutsy beast!"

"Yes; and originally, I believe, that has everything to do with the question; the Normans and Saxons were, I dare say, better fed than their northern neighbours."

"We have as gude sodgers, ony way."

"Yes; Scotsmen have done as brave things in the field as any people that ever fought. But, Sam, what I meant to say at first was, that our countrymen are a good deal conceited of their own merits, and a little apt to disparage others, of whom they know as little as you confess you know of the cockneys."

"Weel, there may be some truth in that," said Sam. "We're frail creaturs after a'. I've never been very positive o' my ain judgment since I was mista'en about Humphy, the gemm cock."

"And what about Humphy?"

"Ow, he was boolybackit, and that was the way he was ca'd Humphy. I *bettit* on his head, and thocht he was sure to beat the ither gemm cock, but the first dig he got wi' the spur, awa ran Humphy, an' there was an end o' him an' my siller."

"Well, Sam, I hope you have given up cock-fighting; it is coarse, cruel work."

"Coorse enough; but as to the cruelty, I'm no vera sure that it's waur than ither kinds o' sport. You see, sir, a gemm cock wad rather fecht than let it alane. It's the bird's natur."

"And the steel spurs, Sam?"

"And the steel spurs, sir, are a mercy, I think; the fecht is suner ower. A gemm cock, sir, is sticket as genteely as a gentleman. A steel spur is finer than a sma' sword, and does the business neat and clean. A gemm cock, sir, is keepit like a gentleman, fed like a gentleman, and, when his time comes, he fechts like a gentleman, and dies like a gentleman."

"And those who run away, like Humphy?"

"Ow, their necks are thrawn, that's a'; and your knights of old, if they showed the white feather, werena the spurs hackit aff their heels, an' werena they hangit for it?"

"Something of that kind, I believe. Well,

I suppose I must let your gamecocks and your knights alone, but I must say I have no taste for cock-fighting, genteel as it may seem to you."

"It's just a' taste, sir; but if it wasna unbecomin', I think I could mind you o' something you were engaged in the ither day at least as cruel as cock-fechtin."

"Fire away, Sam; fair play for ever. I attacked you first, but what on earth can you mean?"

"Just tod-huntin', sir. Didna I see you an' Mr. Charteris an' young Hay, an' twa or three dizzin men, an' twenty couple of hunds, a' against ae puir tod. Cock to cock is fair play, a' the warld ower; but thirty men an' thirty horses an' forty hungry dogs against a beast no' so strong as ony ane o' them, an' his hole steekit up whaur he rins for safety, puir brute,—if that's no' cruelty, I sall let yoursel be the judge."

"I might urge, in defence of fox-hunting, that it keeps down a destructive vermin, but I can see no useful purpose whatever that is attained by cock-fighting."

"*The dead cocks mak grand cock-a-leekie*," said Sam.

"I have done!" exclaimed Warren, beaten at every point.

The storm had passed away, and they returned again to the stream. It was a good deal discoloured by the rain, but the trout were feeding greedily, not springing at the fly as if for sport, but gulping at it at once, and with goodwill. Sam pointed out a kind of ripple in the middle of the stream, and a heaving, caused, as Sam said, by a large flat stone which lay at the bottom. "There's a big troot lyin' there," said he; "it is a grand feedin' place; try a cast, sir." Warren made a cast, without any result. He made another; still no rise. He was pre-

paring to throw a third time, when Sam interfered.

"Stop, sir," said he; "there's something by usual here. I never missed raisin' a fish below that stone, and you fished the place richt enough. Dinna disturb the water; I'll wager a plack there is a saumont lyin' there, and he has frichtened awa the troots. Ay, that's it, sir; an' he'll no' lye lang—he'll be for up the water after the rain. Tak aff that bit castin' line, an' put on a strong minnow tackle, an' I'll get a minnow in the mean time."

Before Warren had completed the recommended change, Sam had captured a minnow, which he adjusted on the tackle.

"Cast over the stone, sir," said he; "and spin the minnow as close below it as you can bringin' it across."

Warren did as he was desired, and a

terrific tug almost jerked the rod out of his hand.

"Losh, sir, haud firm! I kent there was a fish there," cried Sam, in great exultation. "I wadna hae missed that for something. I think we may be pleased the day wi' the sport we have had; what think you? It's a grand thing to have a saumont on with that tackle. Keep a guid strain on him, sir. Weel loupit," as the fish sprung out of the water, "and weel dived," continued he, as it plunged back again. "Pirn up (wind up) your reel; you'r givin' him ower muckle line; keep him light, sir,—that tackle would land a sealgh; he's for doon the water, and you must cross the dyke"; and Sam, without saying more, ran to the dyke and leaped it. When Warren came down, following the lead of the fish, Sam took the rod from him until he clambered over, and then gave it back to its owner. A rush or two and a leap or two,

and the fish was landed. It was a beautiful salmon. Sam pronounced it to be fifteen pounds' weight.

The sport was pursued with great success till evening, and then Warren and Sam took down their reels, carefully arranged their tackle, and made their way to their lodging.

## CHAPTER V.

In maiden meditation fancy free.—SHAKSPEARE.

ONE bright, breezy day, during her father's absence, Florence had gone on the Seals' Bank to walk alone. At low water, the Seals' Bank is left high and dry for about a mile in length, narrowing at both ends—that nearest the beach being approached dry-footed at about an hour before ebb. There is plenty of time to walk to the seaward end and back again before the making of the flood-tide, but after the tide begins to make there is not much time to lose. In spring-tide, with strong easterly winds, the water encroaches with great rapidity on all sides. More than once an unwary loiterer has had enough to do to

reach the shore at the end nearest land by wading a considerable way in two or three feet of water—lucky if he escaped pools fully three or four times that depth. When fairly surrounded, it is no easy matter to know the shallow place between the bank and the shore. When Florence went on the sand, it was quite hard to the tread. The monotony of the surface was broken by large pools full of water, the bottoms of which, for the most part, were covered with the débris of shells white as snow, and sometimes with marine plants of rich brown and green colours—some of them as fine as a lady's veil, and some of them strong, tough, gigantic things, twined and twisted together, like flat snakes, by the action of the restless element which they inhabited. A large stone or rock, here and there, was embedded in the sand and surrounded by water, very much covered by small shell-fish and plants,

and looking like a miniature island, solitary and independent. At certain times, the pools swarmed with small herrings, swimming round and round their place of confinement, seeking in vain to escape, until the return of the tide should again give them liberty to proceed on their mysterious migrations to which Nature has destined them. Florence walked on, noting these things with more interest than she had felt for some time. The strong saline sea breeze was inexpressibly bracing and refreshing, and at the extreme point of the bank the scene which presented itself was both grand and beautiful. The wind blew pretty fresh, and the crested waves charged the bank rank after rank in endless succession, with a roaring, as they fell and broke upon the sand, and a hissing as they made their retreat, as if with the rage and disappointment of an unsuccessful attack. The sun lighted up the white shifting

crests in their dazzling paroxysms, the margin of the bank being covered with the foam which the waves left in their retreat; though repulsed again and again, they formed without a moment's intermission. They were to carry the bank by and by, and Florence, as she retreated yard after yard as the water rolled up to her feet, began to have some idea of this. All at once she recollected having been cautioned by her father against walking there without him. She turned to make her way home again as quickly as possible. It was too far from the other end of the bank to see what was going on there, but she was quite aware that the sand around her had considerably decreased in extent, and that her distance from land was much greater than when walking out. There was not a living soul visible. For the first time the solitude and helplessness of her situation struck her with

consternation. It was but for a moment, for she had the brave spirit of her father, and she walked on, determined not to give way to fear until some actual danger should become evident. A few minutes convinced her that the sea was rapidly encroaching. A wave would sometimes take a sweep in the dry sand for four or five yards inwards, hissing up to her feet, as if in anticipation of swallowing a victim. The extreme rashness of which she had been guilty now became fully apparent. It seemed to her that even the gulls and other sea fowl were aware of her danger. They screamed over her head and swooped past her, as if rejoicing in their perfect immunity from the perils of that remorseless element which roared at her feet, balancing themselves on the gale, or rocking in perfect security on those very waves which were coursing on to her destruction. There they were all safe. Man was

their only enemy. The elements in their fiercest moods were mere playthings. She had hardly got over the third part of the bank when she began to look anxiously towards the shore, which at that part lies about three hundred yards distant. It was with feelings of great relief that she perceived the figure of a man moving over the low hillocks which bound the sandy beach, who, coming in sight, stopped to contemplate her situation. Florence's first idea was to wave her handkerchief as a signal of distress. But she checked the impulse. The path to the shore might yet be clear, and in that case the thought of making signals to a stranger was intolerable. But she had no time to hesitate. The man, after a few minutes' contemplation, suddenly advanced to the water's edge, and having thrown aside coat, hat, and boots, at once plunged into the angry sea, and was seen swimming towards

the bank. The tide was running like a mill-race, but the swimmer, instead of contending with it, allowed himself to be carried up considerably beyond the point opposite to which he had started, and when he touched ground he was very near the middle of the bank. Florence had continued to walk in the direction of the swimmer, who had more than once raised himself to make a signal with his arm. Florence thought she heard his voice crying "Courage!" across the angry waves. At last, when he felt ground, he rose and waded to the bank, and having shaken himself like a great water-dog, and wrung the water from his hair, Florence recognized the dripping figure before her, to her great surprise, to be no other than Philip Charteris. She was the first to speak.

"Good heavens! Mr. Charteris, what has made you do this? What is the matter?"

"Why, not much," answered Philip, to re-

assure her; "but you have got into a scrape, and I have come to get you out of it. Will you accept of my assistance?"

"How can you ask? But tell me," continued she, in great agitation, "is the bank surrounded?"

"An hour ago," answered Philip.

"Then I am lost!" exclaimed Florence, hardly repressing a shriek.

"You are as safe as if you were in your father's house, Miss Warren," becoming grave again as the thought of their position to one another came to his recollection; but we question if the young man was ever so well pleased in his life as now, when he found his strong arm and his steady courage the only things that Florence had to trust to for that life to save which he would cheerfully risk his own.

"Safe, Mr. Charteris, and this raging sea, and—"

"The explanation is easy," returned Charteris. "I should have made it at once. But let us walk on; there is not much time to lose. About a quarter of a mile farther you see a black speck between the bank and the shore; that is a small fishing-boat, or coble, as they call it, at anchor. I can easily reach it, and bring it to you; then, after a voyage of two or three hundred yards, you will be safe. I am about to take the water again, because the tide is strong, and will carry me up; but do not look alarmed; what I am about to do is no more than what any fisher's boy in Elletweem could do as well and as safely as I. Walk on steadily towards the coble; in less than half an hour you will be on dry land." He again waded into the water as long as he had ground, and then swam easily in a slanting direction towards the coble.

To board it and unfasten it from its moor-

ings, to take the oars and row to the bank, was not quickly done. It was more than the work of a quarter of an hour, good work too, and though Florence had continued to watch him with some anxiety, yet fear had almost fled. How could she fear with that confident full voice ringing in her ear, and with that strong athletic form before her, which seemed made to defy danger and to laugh at it when it came on? Fear! it was not fear she felt now. She was far above fear; it was one of those moments of existence which cannot be called happiness: it was too disturbed for that. Pleasure is too light a word to express the feeling. We believe there is no sensation of great joy in this world without some touch of trouble in it. It is needless to attempt to describe a feeling which every one who reads this, and we trust they are many, knows to be indescribable.

Charteris brought the coble to the water's

edge, and Florence stepped in without wetting a foot. In ten minutes she was again on dry land in safety; but when she looked back at the bank, and at the waves which now raged around it, she felt how deep a debt she owed to him, to whom it was more awkward to be in debt than to any one else in the world. "And more blessed, Florence," whispered some small voice in her heart of hearts, which she could not stifle, and which she felt it beyond her power to struggle with.

But with safety came that revulsion from the excitement of danger which is often more overwhelming than danger itself. She was afraid of being overcome by agitation which she could scarcely restrain; and when Philip assisted her to disembark, it was with an imploring look which he could not resist that she asked to be allowed to walk home alone. "I cannot speak now, even to thank

you," said she with difficulty, but offering her hand. Philip, with as much respect as he could have shown to a royal favour, took the hand in his for a moment. In another Florence was gone.

## CHAPTER VI.

Like one whose sleep is gradually broken by music, the maiden's heart was awakened without being disturbed. She followed the charm unconscious whither it led, nor was aware of the flame she had lighted in another's bosom till she perceived the reflection of it glimmering in her own.—MOORE'S EPICUREAN.

THE singular adventure on the Seals' Bank had given rise to much thought both to Florence and Philip. It was one of those chances in life which, when carefully considered, tend to destroy our notions of what is termed chance, seeming rather to be a necessary and important link in the chain of existence than a mere adventitious occurrence, uncalculated and unforeseen. Such chances often effect in a few minutes what has defied the efforts of years. They have

cut many a gordian knot in love, in policy, in adventure, and have decided questions both in national and social history, which have baffled the wisest, rendering calculation and diplomacy contemptible and vain. There was nothing surprising in the meeting of Philip Charteris and Florence Warren on the Seals' Bank. The walk was one of Florence's accustomed relaxations, and without any difficult speculations we may imagine what induced Philip to wander near the spot; but neither the one nor the other chose to look upon the adventure as a mere common and natural occurrence. They both felt a special application in the boiling tide, and the narrowing bank, and out of the nettle danger a flower was again beginning to bloom. Well, the occurrence had broken down the fanciful barrier which seemed to exist between them, and which threatened to become so formidable. Philip had shown

the deep interest he took in her whom he had rescued at some peril. But it was not the action itself which told so much with Florence, as the manner of it. It was no wonder that that bold, strong, and dauntless figure remained inextricably mingled with her thoughts. She had a bold heart herself, and she was above many of the common weaknesses of her sex, but in Philip Charteris she could scarcely help recognizing a guardian spirit as he came to her rescue,—only guardian spirits do not laugh so cheerfully. Florence felt that though life had been endangered in Philip's attempt, it would have been as freely given as the assistance which he made so light of. So she could not help going over and over again all the events of their short acquaintanceship, his actions, sentiments, and opinions, so far as they had been expressed. They all bore the same fearless, independent, intelligent stamp of a

noble nature, never even thinking it necessary to express scorn of what was unworthy or base. Truth and strength were enthroned in the citadel of thought which they never lost command of. Yes! Florence in her mind deeply pondered these things.

Philip was as greatly moved. The strong man was a strong man still—strong in the very weakness which is the touchstone of a fine mind, which displays its purity and tests its truth. They only who have experienced it can tell how a sudden and unexpected interview between those whom circumstances have estranged—whose feelings, instead of being blunted by estrangement, have been rendered more painfully acute—is calculated to act upon every thought and impulse of the heart. It is one of those sudden shiftings of the mind which occur but seldom in a lifetime. It seems as if some magical touch had at once destroyed an apparently settled

malign influence, calling again into vitality and activity the healthful and blissful stimulants of life. Both Florence and Philip had felt that their estrangement was not natural. A sudden change of conduct always calls for some explanation. The one felt he could not offer, and the other that she could not receive such an explanation without being drawn upon ground of great delicacy and embarrassment, although both would willingly have been restored to their former state of acquaintanceship. It had been while musing on the dream of his life that Philip had unconsciously wandered to the vicinity of its origin. As he came within sight of the Seals' Bank, he thought his eyes deceived him when he saw the vision between him and the breakers, — it was as if his thoughts had conjured up a spirit to mock him, and he expected every instant to see it vanish like the spray which was blown from the ocean's

crest. But the spirit vanished not. It assumed human action and expression, identified with his glorious dream. Fancy had started into life. He awoke to realize the fabric of his vision, but fancy had never pictured to him the situation of the moment. There was Florence walking in the very jaws of death, apparently unconscious of peril. Dreams and imaginations were in an instant thrown to the winds. His actions were, as we have seen, as prompt and decisive as his thoughts had been wild and unsettled.

Warren had heard from Florence an account of her danger and escape, and it troubled him. He had seen and understood Philip's conduct better than his daughter. Without watching the young man, he could not help observing the change of his manner after Savile had appeared. He did not wonder at it. He believed Florence to be

wholly uninfluenced by the thoughts of Philip; but even had it not been so, he would have allowed things to take their course. Young hearts must at one time or other be staked on the chances of life. There must be winners or losers, and his darling daughter must run the common risk. He saw little to cause apprehension, Florence was as full of life, and spirit, and happiness, as he could desire, and never more so than when riding beside him, galloping along the sands, at the speed which the noble animal she rode seemed to take a pride in exercising for her amusement.

Savile's declaration and death cast the first shade on that bright face; but the shade was not more than the circumstance caused everywhere in the vicinity. The man was admired and liked, for his abilities were unquestionable, and his liberality unbounded. But somehow the shade continued

longer than Warren had thought of. He began seriously to apprehend that Savile's attentions had had more influence on Florence than he had imagined. He made several allusions to his tragical fate, with a view of eliciting some knowledge of the truth; but the result assured him that his fears on this head were unfounded, and his thoughts took another and truer direction.

Philip had still kept aloof from both Warren and his daughter, haunted by the idea that Savile had not been indifferent to the latter. Though Florence was by no means in the case of a love-sick damsel, she could not help wondering at Philip's caprice in shunning their society, which he had so evidently at one time taken every opportunity of cultivating. She had never met one whose character and conversation had interested her so much in its frankness, fearlessness, and truth. She could read the

book, and she knew the contents were good and rare. It had been suddenly closed, and she had met with no other of similar value. The late adventure was an incident of all others calculated to make a deep impression on a sanguine and most grateful and affectionate nature. Philip, in common courtesy, must call and inquire after her whose life he had preserved. If not, Warren must call and thank him for the life of his daughter.

But Philip came.

The adventure of the preceding day had scattered all his misgivings to the wind. The spirit which he had seen amongst the breakers haunted him in the spiritual beauty and power of her innocence and truth.

The time for decision had come, or rather it had passed away. Reflection and decision were useless; there was now but one course to follow.

## CHAPTER VII.

Come, gentle spring.—Thomson.

There are few things which gladden the heart like the opening of spring. God placed his bow in the sky, as a token that the earth should no more be destroyed by rain; and he places on every tree and shrub, and puny stalk, pledges that the earth's inhabitants shall be maintained in comfort and plenty. Seed time and harvest shall not cease. God is ever speaking to us in the leaf, in the flower, in the small rain, and in the storm. We envy not him who does not listen, and feel his soul grow glad within him, at the sound of the presiding voice.

Warren and Florence sat in Sam's arbour,

as it was called. The little garden had grown into order and beauty. The buds were bursting their green coats, looking more becoming with every rent. The mavis trilled his sweet song among the rustling leaves, and, in the distance, old ocean rolled in his grand voice in rough chorus to the gentler harmonies of nature. There were white sails and whiter wings floating over the heaving expanse, and light fleecy clouds flitting over the empyrean. Deep azure was reflected by the glad waters, save where the cloud's shade, like a grey wing, swept along their face, gradually vanishing in space.

Few words passed between father and daughter. The beauty of the season, and the charms of the surrounding landscape, only partly occupied their attention. Florence's thoughts dwelt upon the risk and the escape of yesterday. It was not very long since she had sat in that bower,

and heard the sounds of Savile's horse approaching. She almost started when she again heard the clank of hurried hoofs. Again she knew whose was the horse and who the rider.

The sounds ceased. The rider was dismounting. It was the opening of another important chapter in life. The history was becoming more complicated.

A servant came into the garden, and informed Mr. Warren that Mr. Charteris had called. Without saying a word, or even looking at Florence, he walked to the cottage. Florence was left alone; glad to be alone for ever so short a time: she felt the time was to be short.

Warren entered the room where Philip awaited him. He had begun to thank him for the great obligations under which he had laid both him and his daughter, when Philip broke short the discourse.

"Forgive my interruption," said he; "but you must be aware that the last thing I should have thought of in coming here to-day, would be to listen to thanks which I deserve not, and which no man in the circumstances would deserve. I feel myself the grateful person in the case, most grateful for having had an opportunity of being useful in a way that any gentleman might be proud of; but I cannot accept of thanks for having been favoured by fortune with one of her most precious missions."

"Be it so, then," said Warren; "and if the subject is to be interdicted, to what am I to ascribe the pleasure of this visit,—for you must be well aware it is a pleasure I have not recently enjoyed?" He spoke rather stiffly, for he thought Philip's conduct had been capricious, and deemed some explanation due to him.

Philip paused a moment. "I wish to

speak to Miss Warren, and alone. Must I be more explicit at present?"

"No; but I must be allowed to persist in my question. I have observed that of late you have shunned our society; permit me to say, a very marked change of conduct on your part. I must ask if anything in my conduct, or in that of my daughter, was the cause of so sudden a change? You must be quite aware that we shunned society when we came to this place, and that, though I had much pleasure in your visits, I never pressed them. In these circumstances, I don't think you ought to regard my question as impertinent."

"I am glad you have asked it," said Philip; "I shall answer it at once. I dare say you cannot have misunderstood the object of my visits; at least—at least, I did not wish to conceal it, but I thought that the attentions of another were more accept-

able to Miss Warren than mine, and I thought it best to retire, for the sake of all parties."

"I am satisfied," said Warren; "but I believe you entirely mistaken. I shall acquaint my daughter with your wish;" and he walked slowly back to the garden.

Florence had remained in the bower, greatly agitated. She had hardly doubted that Philip would call. It was no more than common courtesy, after what had happened. Yet his arrival disturbed her as much as if it had been a surprise. And, perhaps, had he not called, she might have been disturbed too. Hopes and fears make very small puppets of the best of us. Warren appeared, looking quite easy and composed. He was seldom what is called "put out."

"My love," said he, "Mr. Charteris wishes to speak with you. Have you any objection to hear him?" Florence could hardly

answer. "Nay," continued Warren, "I dare say another day will do as well. Shall I tell him you have not yet quite recovered from your recent fright, and would rather be excused to-day?"

"A few minutes, papa," Florence said; and Warren sat down and pretended to read.

And in a few minutes she rose up.

"I am quite ready, papa," and Warren also rose and gave her his arm. She took it, and walked steadily to the cottage. They entered the room where Philip was waiting, and Florence could do no more than bow to his salutation. Her father led her to a sofa and retired.

Philip and Florence were left alone. Ay, they had been alone before, on the bank, in the boat, on the shore; they had rode alone over the moor; but it was different now, —they felt it was.

"I am afraid," said Philip, "I have taken an unwarrantable liberty in intruding upon you so soon after the events of yesterday."

"No; I thought you would come. I wish you could be assured how deeply I feel the service you rendered me, for I cannot express it,—I cannot forget it."

"I hope you will," said Philip, "and also what made my services necessary. I would willingly lose your thanks, could I thereby banish from your mind the recollection of your danger; there was none. I saw two fishing boats pass close to the bank immediately after your escape. They would have rescued you. So, you see, my services are reduced almost to nothing. But, supposing that I had really rendered you a great service, I would have been prepared to ask a great price for it. I must speak plainly, Miss Warren, for this is the first time I have endeavoured to express sentiments which

until I saw you were unknown to me. You cannot have misunderstood my admiration—I tremble to offend you by using another word. Have I offended already?"

"No," answered Florence, faintly, so faintly that an inattentive ear would hardly have caught the sound, but Philip heard it well enough, and the generally unpleasant monosyllable was to him the most encouraging word he had ever heard; and though it was said in a whisper, he somehow liked the tone better than the finest note in her magnificent voice.

"Not offended," said he; "then, Miss Warren, imagine the word I dare not yet even pronounce, and tell me again, have I offended?"

Again, a still fainter whisper; but Philip heard it as well as the first.

Ah! Florence, Florence! where are thy high spirit, and clear voice, and ringing

laugh now? What! All hushed to that frightened whisper? Courage, dear Florence! There is a brave and loyal heart ready to support thee against the world. Trust to it as you did to the strong arm which bore you from the angry sea.

And she did trust. We know not what Philip said,—perhaps nothing very new nor very eloquent,—but it was enough. It ended with some very short question, to which "he paused for a reply." But she rose and advanced towards him, and the blush of Aurora was not more beautiful and pure than that which flushed her hitherto pale cheek as she gave "her hand, and her heart with it," to Philip Charteris.

Drop the curtain.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Adsum.

It was upon a hot, dusty August afternoon, that, foot-sore and toil-worn, a solitary pedestrian might be seen making his way slowly along a turnpike-road, bounded on each side by fine old elms and hedges, in whose leafy wildernesses a thousand merry songsters poured forth a vocal concert, which, tried by the rules of art, might have been found false in every chord, but which, nevertheless, fell pleasantly on the ear. The linnet, the thrush, the chaffinch, the yellow-hammer, all gave forth their separate and independent strains, without regard to key, or order, or time, and yet all the strains joined naturally together, as if meant to make part of the same procession of joyous

sound, and swell the same cheerful outpouring of gratitude. Now and then a more distant performer was heard: the cuckoo from the wood on the side of a neighbouring hill put in his perfect musical third, as if to show his superior education, while the rooks rounded off the thrilling jubilee with their broad chorus, which died gradually away in the blue distance, as they wheeled off on some apparently important expedition.

It was broad sunshine; the yellow grain already gave promise of speedy employment, rolling its light waves with every breeze which broke its golden sleep. But the traveller heeded neither bird nor tree, bush nor flower. There seemed to be only one set of objects on the road which possessed any interest for him—the milestones. Thirty of those mute sentinels had he passed since morning, and he had arrived at the thirty-first when he seemed to wake up from a long and

painful reverie. The stone stood at the middle of an old bridge, or rather it was built into the parapet, below which a rapid and clear running stream sped its way, to lose its simple character in the surges of the great deep. The traveller leaned his arms on the parapet and gazed sadly below; some softening thoughts apparently moving a countenance not often ready to relax its stern though handsome features. He was past middle life, shabbily dressed, but tall and well made. After a few minutes' reflection, he walked down to the side of the stream, took off his worn shoes, disclosing a pair of stockings even more out of order, and taking them off he bathed his weary beaten feet in the cool limpid stream. The ablution seemed to cheer and revive him; he again resumed his tattered "lendings," and wearily pursued his way. Another mile brought him within sight of Sam's dwelling.

## CHAPTER IX.

In a cottage near a wood.

Sam Burn's cottage was a snug and rather singular habitation, but he was not the least like other men; and why should his house be like those of others? It stood about twenty yards back from the Heron stream or *Burn*, as it was called in Scotland. Between the cottage and the stream there was a beautiful piece of turf, on which, on a fine day, Sam's various pets might be seen, keeping company together in perfect amity. There were ducks and poultry of various kinds, and a large grey gull which he had tamed, and a very large raven, besides a number of rabbits, which hopped lazily about, under the very nose of a huge black and tan setter, which seemed to

keep guard over the whole fraternity: he was about the largest of his kind, and very handsome, but he was getting into years, and the once bright tan-colour on his legs and muzzle were beginning to turn grey. There was no other house on the moor for a mile. An old aunt of Sam's kept house for him, a small, clean-looking woman, with quick eyes and active habits, who had a small annuity of her own, which she insisted on devoting to the expenses of the establishment; without this they would have had some difficulty in making the two ends to meet. As it was they lived comfortably enough. They were seldom without trout and salmon and game in their season, for Sam was a notorious poacher, and his aunt could see no great harm in the fact. "The wild things of the moor and the forest," she said, "could na be said to belang to anybody in particular;" we need hardly

say that the doctrine suited Sam's ideas to the letter. The house boasted of four apartments, Sam's bedroom being by far the largest, but it was hardly large enough for the various articles which were stowed away in it. The bed was in one corner, as much out of the way as possible, being evidently the least important article in the room. It consisted of a mattress stretched on the bare floor, for Sam would never sleep in a regular bed if he could help it; but the linen was perfectly white, and all the apartment was scrupulously clean. The walls were covered with fishing and shooting apparatus, fishing-rods and landing-nets, and powder-flasks and shot-bags, and dressed skins of various kinds, the original owners of which Sam had captured. There was one huge dressed bear's-skin, which a sailor-brother had brought home to Sam, and which in the bitter cold nights of winter he spread over him, and lay

as comfortable as a king. He contrived to make what kind of rods he required for the sport of the day. He despised screws and ferules. He *wuppit* the pieces together with bits of cord, and, rude and irregular as his implements were, no one in the country side could pretend to make a basket like Sam Burn. The walls were farther adorned with deers' horns and pictures of game-cocks and race-horses, and of a greyhound as large as life, which Sam had once possessed, and whose portrait he had bargained for with a drunken but not unskilful artist, which he thought was equal to any Landseer. The portrait of old Ringo is most likely the only work of art by which the poor artist will ever be remembered. Ringo had been, in Sam's opinion, the best hound that ever hunted hare, but Ringo now slept with his fathers, and the setter Captain reigned in his stead. It was on that fine summer day Sam was sitting on a rustic

seat of his own contrivance before the cottage, with all his fishing apparatus beside him, bags of feathers, all sizes of hooks, card-board, tinfoil, resin, scissors, etc. The raven and the grey gull were sitting beside him,—Nick and Dick, as he called them,—Nick keeping a sharp eye on the various implements lying beside Sam, but not daring to satisfy his longing to purloin them; Dick sitting pensive and composed, sleepy and contented, having feasted sumptuously on a large, lank, ill-grown pike, which Sam had presented to him. Mrs. Wilson had brought her chair to the door, and was engaged in that delicate operation called turning the heel of a stocking. Captain, who liked the old woman better than Sam, was lying at her feet, now and then opening his lazy eye, and wagging his tail, when he thought he had any chance of being noticed, or when a word struck his ear which he conceived he was interested in. Warren

had been up the stream, and appeared in sight, fishing-rod in hand, but scarcely making a cast, except at some tempting turn or bend, where the water gurgled away into a broad shallow pool, fringed with bright yellow sand, and sparkling like a thousand diamonds as the tiny ripples threw back in quivering reflection the glare of the mid-day sun. Seeing Sam, he strolled slowly towards him.

"A bra' day for the country, an' a bad ane for the troots," said Sam, as he came up; "but they may tak' in the gloamin', wi' the midge flee."

"I shall scarcely wait so long," answered Warren, taking the seat to which Sam had invited him, after exchanging courtesies with Mrs. Wilson, with whom he was already a favourite. "I see you are busy making preparations for sport; but are not those flies you are dressing too large for this water?"

"Ow, I'm just buskin twa or three for the sea troot; they 'll be up the water in thousands after the first spate; an' they 're the best sport after a', if it binna saumont—they gie you twice the play o' a burn troot, an' if they 're in prime condition, they are a better fish to eat. To my mind, there 's nae fish so gude, if they 're fresh run an' cookit the day they are catched; an' they 're no' sae dorty as the burn troots. Od, there was a day twa summers syne, that Mr. Hay o' Haystone an' his twa sons an' me had a tak there never was the like o' in this very burn; the water was in famous colour, just like licht-coloured brandy, an' that day the fish wid hae taen ony flee that ever was buskit. Weel, we gied Mr. Hay the lead o' the water—reason gude. In a short time he hookit a fish, and by and by, when it fund it couldna get awa', we saw it spang oot o' the water twa yards high, tryin' to brak' the

line ; but the Laird was ower auld a hand for that, and in ten minutes he landed a sax pund troot—a very pictur'. He was in prime condition, an' better than a grilse. Sic twa hours fishin' as we had ! The Laird, however, had the best tak, and he was king o' the water that day ; an' he 's as gude as a king ony day."

"Was not six pounds a heavy fish for a sea trout ?"

"A big fish for the water ; but I 've seen ane eighteen pund, an' anither twenty-nine, but they were na taen hereabout."

"And what are sea trout ?"

"Weel, sir, I think they are just a breed by themsels. Folk thocht for a lang time that they were young saumont, an' I thocht that way mysel. We ca'd them saumont troot, but that's a' nonsense. Od, it's a queer thing they were sae lang in findin' oot that a parr was a young saumont. I thocht it lang before Shaw wrote his book aboot it,

or Young either. The thing was before your very lookin' een."

"And there 's no doubt about the matter now?"

"Deil a doot. There 's first the parr, and then the smoult, and then the grilse, and then the saumont. What puzzled the folk, you see, was, how the smoult grew so fast into a grilse. They couldna believe that a smoult that went down into the saut water aboot four ounces weight, should come back to the fresh water again weighin' sax and seven pund. That auld toop-headed carle, Davie Graham, him that has the nets at the Crook, disna believe it, or *winna* believe it, but it 's oot o' sheer thrawnness or obstinacy. I ance took a smoult to him, an' scrapit aff the upper scales, an' let him see the bars o' the parr below them; but it was nae guid; he 's determined no' to think like ither folk."

"I think you seem to have studied Natural

History," said Warren, much amused at Sam's disquisitions.

"Me! Na; I never studied onything since I left the schule, an' no' muckle there, forby learnin' to read and write, an' say the Carrachers, for I never made muckle o' the coontin'. But Natural History is grand readin', only there 's so mony lees in it aboot dogs, an' tods, an' puggies, an' sic like. Od, the beasts are a vast deal wiser than the men wha write aboot them, if you believe some o' their tales! There 's a thing that puzzles them a' though, and that 's the eels. Naebody can tell hoo they breed, for they 've nae ran (roe), an' there never was a young ane fund within them. It 's just a natural mystery. What think you, sir?"

"Why, I think nothing satisfactory has yet been ascertained. But what do you think yourself?"

"Weel, sir, I think there 's some change

after they 're first brought to life, something like the cod bait turnin' into the water-flee, or the worm into the butterflee, but we canna find oot what the thing is that it first has the shape o'. I dinna think that they breed thegither as eels."

"But," suggested Warren, "though the grub be changed to a winged insect, there is no doubt that those insects deposit the eggs or larvæ; that they breed the things which are changed into insects, and I should think that eels must either breed eels, or the things which are changed into eels."

"There 's some sense in that," said Sam. "Weel, it 's just a mystery, and there I suppose it must just remain. We 're puir ignorant creaturs, after a'. I 've nae doot the thing is very simple if we only kent it. Maybe eels just grow like mites in cheese. There 's Gilbert White, ane o' the best o' them, sic havers he writes aboot the

swallows! But I daresay you're tired o' my nonsense: there's a half a dozen flees for the sea troot—tak them wi' you and try them after the first rain. I'll wager a plack they'll kill if there are fish in the water."

"Thank you, Sam; and whereabout would you advise me to fish?"

"You canna gae wrang between this an' the sea; but it's as weel to keep up the water,—there's a deal o' dirt comes up wi' the tide for twa or three miles." It was about this part of the conversation that the poor wayfarer mentioned in our last chapter appeared, walking wearily along the moor. He passed close by the cottage, and cast his eye carelessly on Warren and Sam. He looked again, more attentively, at Warren and his interest seemed to be awakened as he gazed. Observing, however, that he was attracting attention, he passed slowly on. When about a hundred yards beyond the cottage, he sat

down, and waited until Warren took his departure. He then retraced his steps, and again stood leaning on the little fence which enclosed Sam's territories.

"Weel, friend," said Sam, "have you anything to say to me? What do you want, man? You look tired; are you hungry?"

"I am tired and hungry too," said the man; "footsore and destitute; but I am not begging. Will you tell me the name of the gentleman who left your house just now?"

"His name is Warren," answered Sam; "and as nice a gentleman as ever had a name."

"Warren! Surely not," said the stranger.

"Then you ken better than me," Sam bluntly observed. "He cam here by that name, and I dinna think he looks like ane that would care aboot concealin' his name.

But come in, man; if you're hungry you're welcome to what's in the house. Come in by, will you?"

The stranger did not think proper to decline the invitation, and Mrs. Wilson, apparently not at all surprised at Sam's proceedings, put food and beer before him. His dress was sadly worn and shabby, but there was still the demi-handsome face, with a somewhat hardened expression. He did all justice to the good cheer. Having satisfied his hunger, he again pressed Sam for information about the gentleman who had left; and Sam, knowing nothing but what was favourable, told all he knew. It was not much, and not what the stranger appeared to expect. He rose, and thanked Sam for his kindness, and again took the road to Thriveport.

"Warren!" thought he to himself; "it cannot be! I cannot be mistaken with that

face! But it is long since I saw him, and—but I cannot be mistaken! It 's the man I want, and I 'll see him soon; but I must go and see how matters stand,—if his brother be alive, and all about it. Then my secret may be of use to this man and to me."

## CHAPTER X.

THREE days after the occurrences in the last chapter, Warren was sitting at the pleasant bow-window of his cottage. It was about dusk, in a fine summer evening, and he was apparently watching an immense fleet of sea-fowl floating down the river with the ebb tide, feeding on the rich shoals of small fry, whose name is million in that spacious stream. Various kinds of fry—eels, sillocks, herrings—move with the tide and in the eddies in such numbers that they appear like a blue compact and solid mass, save where every now and then a hundred silver bellies are turned up by some sudden jerk of the main body, occasioned, perhaps, by the

attack of some large fish, who pounces at pleasure among the countless victims, sinking again to the bottom, to renew, when it so pleases him, his easy and profitable depredations. At present one of those moving masses was under contribution to whole squadrons of grey gulls, pictarines, and sea pyots. The noise of their screaming and quarrelling over their prey might be heard distinctly for miles, above the lazy, sullen splash of the wave as it broke on its smooth and unopposing border, rolling along with gradually diminishing crest until lost in the hazy distance of the expanse. Warren's eye was fixed on these shrieking myriads, and at another time he might have found amusement in watching their frantic eagerness after their prey, like the greatly more ravenous chase of mankind after the objects of their appetites; but his thoughts were occupied otherwise. He saw not the restless wings

nor did he hear the deafening clamour, or if he saw and heard, the eye and the ear communicated not with the occupied brain,—he was absorbed in the contemplation of his own fortunes and position, or rather those of his daughter. Though easy in his pecuniary circumstances, he had made small provision for the future; and now that he was past the *mezzo cammino* of life, he felt that the time for great exertions had passed away. He was not one who balances the loss of misspent time with the fancied profits of future industry. He was quite aware that he would continue to lead the half-industrious kind of life which he had hitherto led, and, having no faith in what are termed resolutions for the future, he spared himself the useless trouble of making them.

## CHAPTER XI.

I could a tale unfold.—SHAKSPEARE.

A FIGURE passing before the window interrupted the uneasy current of his reflections. It was the man who had been inquiring of Sam about Warren. "Some sturdy beggar!" said he to himself; but before he had time to decide on the anticipated request for assistance, with the usual apologies and the unavoidable causes for mendicity, the stranger opened the door of the room and, hat in hand, stood before him. He looked better with his hat off. The forehead was large and well-shaped, but years and care had grizzled the once coal-black hair, and little care had been taken to repair their ravages.

"I saw you were alone, sir," said the unceremonious intruder, not disrespectfully; "and I wish to see none but yourself."

"I dare say I can guess your errand, my friend," remarked Warren.

"I am sure you can't!" was the calm and assured reply.

"I can't then, since you are no beggar, as I may imply from your words. Well, say at once what your business is with me, for I am at a loss to conceive it. I am no reader of mysteries."

"And yet," said the stranger, "I bring you a mystery which you will not refuse to study, —or rather, to speak in plain terms, I have a secret to tell you. Will you listen? I can carry it elsewhere, where it might be valuable to me, and where, to confess the truth, it might not. I am not wishing to drive a bargain with you, when I say I have something to tell you which may be of very great

importance to you, and which again, to tell the truth, may *not*. But I am sorely fatigued. May I take a chair; and will you bestow a few minutes on *my mystery?*" said the stranger, with an expression and emphasis which began to tell on the steady and well-guarded mind of the auditor.

Warren signed to the stranger to be seated, and pouring out a glass of wine, he handed it to him, saying quietly, "Well, take that, and tell your story."

"It is long since anything of that kind has passed my lips," said the weary-looking man, putting down the glass with something like a sigh of pleasure.

"Help yourself, then," said Warren; "but if you have anything to say, you must really say it at once. I have no time, or rather, at present, no inclination for trifling."

"I did not come here to trifle," said the stranger, again filling his glass, and draining

it to the bottom. "I did not travel so far," continued he, "to trifle, or of all men to trifle with you. I speak to the second son of Sir David Lockhart, of Rosemount and Glenthorn, and to one who expected to see the latter title attached to his name."

Warren was on his guard, and betrayed no surprise; but he looked fixedly at his companion for a little time, and then, apparently speaking to himself, "I should know that face! I must have seen it somewhere; but when and where!"

"Ay! look again, Percy Lockhart!" said the man, with something like dignity, in spite of the old coat and the dirty linen. "You will have to look more than once ere you recognize in the broken-down blackguard before you, in the miserable returned convict and degraded outcast, a man you have often seen, and who was once respectable! Do you recollect Richard Chalmers?"

"Chalmers!" exclaimed Warren. "Good God! The—the—"

"The robber of the Thriveport Bank!" you would say: "the convicted felon, who was only banished for his offence, though the judge said he should have been hanged! Yes," he exclaimed, "I was tried by a jury of my countrymen,—tried and condemned, and mercifully banished; and I have served my time, and knocked about the world since, and I have come hither to serve you, and perhaps myself at the same time. Sit still, and hear me, sir," continued he, as Warren made a motion to rise. "I know what you are about to say,—that with such as I you can have no further communication; but, for the love of God, sit still and hear me out, and then, if you will, order me to your door, and your dogs to worry me! Hear me, I say; for you had once a kind and a noble heart! It was you, Mr. Lockhart, who succoured my poor

old mother in her desolation, when others shrunk from the dwelling where the robber had lived. May the widow's blessing be upon you! Hear me one instant, and then—"

The man rose from his chair, and, standing composed and erect, raised his right hand to heaven, and boldly, solemnly, and slowly said, "I swear by Almighty God, as I shall answer to God at the great day of judgment, that I am as innocent of the crime for which I have suffered as you are! Do you believe me, Percy Lockhart?"

"I cannot doubt an assertion so solemnly made. Chalmers, I believe you. Sit down," said he to the excited man. "I remember very distinctly some very doubtful circumstances attending your case, and of some more which came out after your banishment, I believe. I cannot resist the belief that you have been a deeply injured man."

"May God bless you, Mr. Lockhart!"

exclaimed the poor convict, fairly overcome. "You have spoken the first word of comfort I have heard since I was an outcast from the world—a word which almost redeems the sufferings of years,"—and it was with some difficulty that the poor fellow restrained his emotion from breaking out.

Warren—we shall still call him so—allowed him time to compose himself, and again addressed him:—"I believe you are innocent; but what can my belief do in your favour? The world is hard of conviction in such cases, and—"

Chalmers respectfully interrupted him. "Pardon me, I came not here to speak of this—at least at present. I came on your business."

"On mine!" exclaimed Warren, without attempting to conceal his surprise.

"On yours," returned his companion, with the composure of one who knows what

he is about; "and of that you shall soon be convinced."

Warren lighted his great meerschaum, which was seldom far from him, and settling himself in his chair, asked him to proceed.

"Well, then," he began, "I must go back many years in our histories. I was then a clerk to old Samuel Walker, Writer and Notary Public in Thriveport. I was afterwards, as you know, employed in a situation of trust in the bank. Walker was the agent of your father, Sir David. You were then in your youth, and it was a promising one. Every one spoke of your abilities and high spirit, and regretted that the broad lands of Rosemount were to go to your brother, and that upon him would devolve the duty of keeping up the old family name in the county. But matters looked well enough; Sir David possessed two estates, the first as heir of entail, to which your brother, of

course, would succeed to a certainty, but he was absolute fiar of Glenthorn; and it was the opinion of those who knew him best that he would leave the property to you, and every one looked upon you as the undoubted heir."

Warren laid aside his pipe with some impatience. Chalmers was treading on tender ground; and a host of nearly extinguished emotions rose up in Warren's mind, to his no small discomposure and annoyance. "My friend," interrupted he, "you can scarcely imagine that these reminiscences can be very pleasant to me; I am at a loss to conceive their object, and especially with regard to yourself."

"They have one object, and one of no small importance to you," replied the narrator. "I shall not tax your patience long. Well, then," he resumed, "allow me merely to allude to the subject which made ill blood between you and your father, and which, on

the contrary, was the cause of raising your brother in his favour. Sir David had never made much of him before, but he now showed his preference in many ways, and it began to be the general opinion that he would inherit both the entailed property and the estate of Glenthorn. When Sir David took likings or dislikings, they were strong ones, and they were seldom overcome, especially the latter. I beg your pardon," seeing his auditor a little impatient; "I shall confine myself to what is merely necessary. Well, your father died, and, singularly enough, his agent, Mr. Walker, died almost at the same time,—rather before. This I have learnt only since I came home. After Sir David's interment, no testamentary document having been discovered, your brother, as a matter of course, came into possession of the two properties, and, as he and every one else thought, legally and fairly."

Warren, who had resumed his pipe,—partly, it must be confessed, to conceal his emotion at hearing these old family grievances brought so suddenly to light again and in so strange a manner,—now laid it aside, and looked with undisguised interest at his singular visitor, who continued his narrative without a pause.

"As I have said, Walker died a very short time before your father; but I recollect, as well as if it were yesterday, that, some time before, Sir David called on my old employer, when they had a long conference in the green room, where Walker was wont to receive his most distinguished clients. Some days afterwards, I was desired to go with him to Rosemount, to witness the execution of a deed, which I now understand he had written with his own hand, which was his custom when he considered the subject of great importance, and especially when deeds of a testamentary nature had to be prepared.

It was a treat to see one of old Walker's dispositions—every letter was as clean and stiff as himself. Pardon this nonsense," said the narrator; but Warren, who had become greatly interested, only signed to him to proceed.

"Well, sir, we arrived at Rosemount in Meldrum the innkeeper's old post-chaise, and we were immediately shown into the library, where Sir David was evidently waiting for us by appointment. I was requested to withdraw into another room, I supposed until Walker explained the exact nature of the deed, which I observed he had brought with him, and read it over, for he always insisted on reading over every word before he would allow it to be signed. An hour passed, when I was again called in, along with the butler, to witness Sir David's signature. We signed as witnesses; but in doing so I tried to discover what was the nature of

the deed which had been prepared with so much secrecy. All I had time to discover, however, was your name and that of Glenthorn, which were both written in a kind of half text, and which caught my eye in the hurried glance I obtained of the writ. The butler then signed below me and withdrew. My employer filled up the testing clause on the spot, and, folding up the deed, gave it to Sir David, who, opening the upper lid of a large writing-desk, touched a spring, when a concealed kind of drawer appeared, into which he deposited the deed; and telling Mr. Walker that in case of accident he would find it there, if he did not change his mind and destroy it, he locked up the desk, and we returned to Thriveport.

"I did not see your brother on the day we went to Rosemount. I believe Sir David had chosen a day when he was absent from home, but he had heard of Mr. Walker's

visit, probably from the butler, who would likely enough mention something of the paper which he had signed, and no doubt he would have some curiosity respecting what had been done; but he durst not have questioned Sir David, as you well know; so some days after he called, as if by chance, at Mr. Walker's, and was closeted with him for a short time; but he could get nothing out of Mr. Walker. I believe he never knew what the deed was; nor does he know at this hour.

"Well," continued Chalmers, "Mr. Walker died, and so did your father, and you know what became of me. And now for the point and purpose of my story, which you must have already imagined. I believe the deed was a disposition in your favour of the lands of Glenthorn, and I also think it quite possible that it lies in the secret drawer of your father's desk at this hour."

"And quite possible that my father destroyed it."

"Quite possible," assented Chalmers, "but not, I think, very likely. He was failing in health, which probably was the cause of his executing the deed, and he never recovered. You cannot but think it worth the trouble of inquiring about!"

"Where, and how?" inquired Warren; "at my brother's?"

"I should not advise that. I say nothing against Sir George,—I believe him to be a man of honour and a gentleman; but I should not, in the first place, apply to him. Samuel Walker left a son, who succeeded to his father's business, and who is in possession of all his old papers. He was studying in Edinburgh when the deed was executed. Very probably he never knew anything about it; but whether it be destroyed or not, I could wager my life that the scroll or draft

is carefully put past in old Mr. Walker's repositories. Were I in your place—excuse the supposition—I would apply, and at once, to Edmund Walker. I am told he is the best lawyer in the county. What is more to the purpose, I am also told that he is an honest man."

"I will think of this," said Warren, suddenly. "In the mean time, leave me. It would be idle to deny that your information has affected me much, but I must have time to think. Can you call upon me to-morrow, and early? But before you go, let us return to your own affairs, which I had almost forgotten in the interest excited by your narrative. You say you are innocent, and I declare once more that I believe you thoroughly; but had you never any suspicion who got the money, or who took it? You might have paid it away by mistake."

"No, that is not possible. I placed the parcel far back in the drawer, not expecting to have occasion to use so large a sum, and I had no occasion to use it. *Davidson, the manager, took the money!*"

"Why, I recollect *his* evidence was by far the strongest thing in your favour! He declared his conviction of your innocence, spoke highly of your conduct, and stated that it was quite probable you might have given away the money by mistake, or that it had been stolen when your back was turned."

"I do not think it possible that it could have been stolen by any one but himself. I recollect he sent me to his own room for some bills which were lying on his desk, and that was the only time I was absent from the counter. It was my counsel, and a right able one he was, who suggested this to me; but he knew the favourable evidence which Davidson was prepared to

give for me, and he thought it dangerous to endeavour to save me by directing suspicion against one who stood so high in public opinion."

"Davidson! There is some probability in the supposition; but instead of throwing suspicion against you, he endeavoured to establish your innocence."

"Yes; I believe he wished to injure me as little as possible consistent with his own safety. He thought, as there was no positive proof against me, I should not be convicted, and it would have satisfied his conscience so far had he got me off."

"But what on earth could tempt such a man to commit such a crime?"

"Ay, that was what my counsel tried at one time to find out. He was convinced there was some secret embarrassment. Henry Cockburn could look through men, and he thought that Davidson's evident great anxiety

to save me was something like a proof of his guilt; but he could learn nothing. The man's character was beyond suspicion; and Cockburn thought it would tell against me with the jury if there appeared any desire on my part to cast suspicion on one who was evidently friendly to me."

"Cockburn is still alive; I shall see him," said Warren. "He forgets nothing. Something may yet be possible."

"Thanks! Thank you a thousand times! But I suspect the chance is small; of this, however, hereafter. Your own affair is, I think, too important to admit of delay. I shall call upon you to-morrow at ten o'clock. Will this suit you?"

"Perfectly; and—you must be in want—take this," forcing a bank-note into his hands. "It will enable you to provide yourself with some things which must be necessary to you."

"I shall not affect to decline what, God knows, is more than necessary to me;" and he respectfully took leave of Warren, lighter in heart than he had been since the day of his misfortune.

## CHAPTER XII.

In moments of deep feeling, alike on sudden bursts of prosperity as in darker hours, man must be alone. It requires some self-communion to prepare ourselves for good fortune, as well as to encounter difficulty, and danger, and disgrace.—DISRAELI.

WARREN sat long in deep thought after Chalmers had disappeared. He was not a man for fortune's finger to play with easily; but few could have heard the information so singularly and unexpectedly imparted to him without being, if not "perplexed in the extreme," at least deeply moved. The idea of his ever becoming proprietor of Glenthorn, had never since his father's death entered into his mind. Now that it had intruded, it gave rise to thoughts and feel-

ings more tumultuous and agitating than he was pleased to find himself subject to. But there was no help for it. His thoughts would have their way: he felt himself compelled to give way to them. He had been toiling for many years for a livelihood, while his brother had been enjoying his lawful rights. He had renounced his name and country, while, but for an accident, he might have been mingling in all honourable courtesies with that society to which by birth he belonged. There was something in the fact that his brother, to his own ample means, had been adding his and his daughter's portion, without bestowing a single thought on the lawful possessor, which gave rise to ideas which, on reflection, he would willingly have forgotten. But he could not help feeling a passing satisfaction at the thought of appearing, and claiming from the hard, selfish, greedy man, the possessions he held

so dear. This state of mind was of short duration. Ashamed of its having existed even for a moment, he started up, and hastily taking his hat, he made his way to his favourite walk, the Seals' Bank. It was low water at the time, when for a brief space the restless tide pauses in its mysterious allegiance to its mistress,—when the white foam for a few minutes remains almost motionless,—when the slackened cable tells the mariner that it is dead ebb, and that the sleeping hull is about to move in obedience to the restless element which is now also awaking from its moment of repose. At this time the ripples on the sandy margin of the river almost cease to curl, as if to gather strength for a space for another day's turbulence. It is at this time, too, that the sea-fowl sit in vast assemblies, ready, at a moment's alarm, to rise and make off for the sea, leaving not one single bird out of

thousands who will trust to anything like the shape of man approaching. The female bait-gatherers, in the most picturesque and independent of attitudes and the scantiest of attire, are to be seen marching homewards with their burdens on their heads; and often, at this time, a lover of such things may catch from sand, sea, and cloud, tints and effects as pleasing and harmonious as the great field of nature anywhere presents.

The time and the scene calmed the troubled spirits of Warren. He viewed his recent state of mind with anything but satisfaction. He had been trained, or at least he had served, and served honourably, in the school of adversity; he flattered himself he had learnt to subdue those rebellious elements in our nature which war against human peace; but the best and most experienced of us learn every now and then "how frail we are." But the fresh, invigorating sea air gave

health to body and spirit. As he reached the extreme point of the long tongue of sand-bank on which he had been walking, he was again able to enjoy the gorgeous picture which he had so often contemplated at the same spot.

It was some hours before sunset, and the picture was in its happiest light. Looking up the river, the rich red and purple of the distant clouds, compared with the shifting and sober grey tints of the sand in the foreground, formed a bolder contrast than is generally presented on canvas. Broad rents in the clouds displayed sheets of pure dazzling green, fringed with that ragged and illuminated net-work which Nature alone can weave. The river had begun to flow in one glassy, undulating, sleepy heave; the brown hills in the distance, amongst which it disappeared, met the dipping glories of the sky so harmoniously, that the exact line of their junction was

undistinguishable by the eye, save where some bold black peak refused to ratify the union, glooming with sullen displeasure on the beauty which his darkness, instead of diminishing, served only the more effectually to bring out. Beyond those distant mountains lay the county where the dreams of his youth had faded into the hard realities of life. In the quiet of the evening, it was his custom to walk to this spot, often alone, to view the distant boundaries of his ancestors' domains, not with foolish longings or repinings, but with the satisfaction of a man who has conquered those frailties, and who has been able to discipline his mind so as to draw a wholesome lesson even from subjects of disappointment and sorrow. But it is not to be wondered at that he now looked at the familiar objects in the distance with different feelings from those he had been accustomed to experience. Strictly speaking, these were

not very selfish, for it was his daughter's interests which were paramount in his mind. Here again he checked his speculations, for all might yet turn out a delusion, and he resolved to say nothing to Florence until there was something like certainty on the subject.

"With the morning cool reflection came," and cool reflection accused him of having been unreasonably buoyed up by the story of one whose character, to say the least of it, depended almost solely on his own testimony. But with the morning Chalmers also came, his appearance being very much changed for the better. A post-chaise was in readiness. In the course of the journey to Thriveport, he repeated distinctly what he had stated on the preceding evening. His narrative was so plain and consistent that Warren was confirmed in his determination to apply to the son of the old notary

who had prepared the deed, and to be guided by what he might learn from him. In a couple of hours they arrived at Thriveport, and, leaving the vehicle and Chalmers at a hotel, Warren proceeded to the writing chambers of Mr. Edmund Walker.

He was fortunately in his chambers; though, on Warren inquiring for him of one of the clerks, the latter showed a little hesitation in introducing him to his employer. He was, however, shown into the sanctum of the writer, whom he expected to find deeply engaged with some of the mysteries of his profession. He was preparing some kind of an apology for his intrusion, when, on entering the room, he was a little surprised at the scene which presented itself, and he found his apology unnecessary.

Walker himself was easily recognized. He was sitting in one of those large easy-chairs for which those of the legal profession

seem to have an especial predilection, perhaps because bodily ease and convenience leave the mind more unembarrassed in considering subtle disquisitions and nice distinctions. He was studying neither Erskine nor Bell, neither "process" nor "progress," but a very handsome new fishing-rod just arrived from Alfred, of London, whose merits he was descanting upon to a very unlikely person to be discovered in confidential intercourse with a lawyer, and especially a lawyer in the burgh of Thriveport. Walker was a very handsome man, above six feet in height, with that clear expression of perfect sincerity which is said not to be characteristic of his profession. He was attired in a loose, coarse shooting-jacket, with corresponding inferiorities. Round his hat, which surmounted a voluminous "process" which *slept* on the table, were wound casting-lines and pieces of gut and flies, in that fashion in which the

brethren of the angle generally choose to display the implements of their art. His companion was no other than our old acquaintance Sam Burn, who seemed to be on the most intimate terms with the man of law; they had been discussing subjects in which Sam was even better informed than the learned practitioner.

"It's a bonny thing, nae doot," were the words which caught Warren's ear as he entered, "but I wadna gie my ain wand for the best rod that was ever made in Lunnan;" for it was a weakness of Sam to believe that his rod and his gun and his auntie were by far the best specimens of their nature and kind that ever existed or that ever were likely to exist.

Warren entered, and Sam and he immediately exchanged good-humoured courtesies, a little to Walker's surprise, who was at a loss to conceive how the handsome stranger

who now addressed him was apparently on such familiar terms with Sam. However, he had no time for conjecture, for Warren briefly informed him that he had called for the purpose of soliciting his professional advice in a matter of some importance.

Walker seated himself at his desk. "I hope you will excuse me," said he, smiling; "but you may observe I am just starting on a most important fishing case, as Sam can tell you. If the business can be deferred till to-morrow, why, it would suit me much better."

"It might be deferred, certainly; but I should esteem it a great favour if you would postpone the fishing case till to-morrow, and give me the benefit of your assistance and advice in a case which I am sure you will admit to be of more importance."

"Certainly, I cannot hesitate a moment if you are serious. Well, Sam, as the gig has

been hired, Tom Watson can go with you. He has been working hard of late, and deserves a day's amusement." Tom Watson, a fine young fellow in the outer office, a gentleman's son in the neighbourhood, was informed of this disposition in his favour to his unbounded delight. There were few things in life he thought preferable to a day at "the water side" with Sam Burn.

"And Sam," continued Walker, "look what kind of a brute Meldrum has sent. I hear the gig at the door."

Sam disappeared and immediately returned. "It's the bey (bay) mare, sir."

"Then, Sam, you are to drive, and on no account give up the reins to Tom. That mare is a runaway. Tom, you must not tempt Sam." But Tom, suspecting the turn the conversation was taking, had suddenly disappeared, and was waiting for Sam at the door.

"If she rin awa wi' me," said Sam, "I'll forgie her."

"Yes, I know she is safe in your hands, Sam. Off with you then, and take this to pay expenses. Was there ever such an obstinate fool?" continued Walker, forcing something into Sam's hands.

In a minute more the rattle of the wheels was heard, and Sam and the delighted Tom Watson disappeared.

"And now, Mr. Warren," for so I heard Sam address you, "pray be seated. I am entirely at your service."

"My real name is not Warren," was the answer; "for I must confess an imposture before you can understand my story and position. My name is Percy Lockhart, son of—"

"The late Sir David Lockhart!" interrupted Walker, much surprised. "Pray forgive my very unceremonious reception of

you. It must be something very extraordinary which has procured me the pleasure of this visit."

"It is something very extraordinary," returned Lockhart,—we may change the name now,—"and only known to myself yesterday;" and he told his auditor the history which Chalmers had narrated. Walker was much surprised and deeply interested. At the conclusion of the story he rang a bell, and on a clerk appearing, he desired him to bring the ledger for 18—, mentioning the year in which Sir David had died. The clerk appeared with the old worn-out record. Walker turned up Sir David Lockhart's account, and went over it attentively. "No," said he; "I examined this account before, with the view of ascertaining if any will had been made; but there was nothing—not an entry to justify the conclusion."

"Then," said Lockhart, "the whole must

be a delusion or a fabrication; and yet the man Chalmers appeared so positive, and he can gain so little by such a story if it have no foundation, that—"

"It cannot be a delusion," said Walker. "Stay, it is very possible my father may not have entered the thing in his books." He again rang the bell. "Bring me the index to the old papers," and the book indicated was brought to him. He consulted it a few minutes, and again rang the bell. "Bring me, from the garret where the old papers are kept, the bundle marked 212. No; I shall go myself." Turning to Lockhart, he said, "We are on the scent now." Lockhart, it may be believed, awaited his return with some impatience and anxiety. Walker was not very long. He appeared bearing in his hands a brown-paper parcel, marked with the number he had mentioned; this he speedily broke open. After a short

search he fixed upon some sheets of paper carefully folded up and tied together, which proved to be the draft of the will of Sir David Lockhart, disposing the lands of Glenthorn to his youngest son, Percy Lockhart. Walker read the draft hastily over.

"This is all clear enough," said he; "but it is merely a draft, and—by the by, Mr. Lockhart, I am your brother's agent, and this is a most serious matter for him, that is, if the deed should really turn up. I can't act for you both, and I can't apprise him of this, in justice both to himself and you. Mr. Lockhart, you and I must not part until we have got to the bottom of this matter. I must not see nor communicate with Sir George except in your presence. It is a most delicate affair. What to do?" He leaned back in his chair, and Lockhart did not think fit to interrupt him. In a few minutes he seemed to have formed his reso-

lution. "I have it," said he; "the Sheriff Substitute of the county is an intimate acquaintance of Sir George. We shall call upon him, and be guided by his advice. He is an honest man, and an excellent lawyer. You will be quite safe in his hands, and so shall I. Stay; what is this?" as he perceived a jotting at the end of the deed, which had escaped him. It was a memorandum by old Walker, mentioning the day and date of the execution of the deed, and where it was deposited, viz., in the private drawer of Sir David's desk. There was now no doubt of Chalmers's story, at all events.

"This is no matter for delay, Mr. Lockhart, though I feel myself in a very unpleasant situation with regard to your brother; but my course is clear. I must not communicate with him nor allow it to be supposed even, until we have sifted the thing to the bottom. Let us go to the Sheriff. I am hardly in

professional trim," said he, glancing at his sporting dress, "but the Sheriff is a bit of a sportsman himself, and he is not at all particular."

In a short time they were on their way for Sheriff Duncan's; they fortunately found the worthy Judge at his chambers. Surrounded by papers, he was busily engaged dictating long notes, to an interlocutor or judgment, to a clerk who was trying to make his pen keep pace with the Sheriff's rapid diction. He did not seem at all to relish the interruption, for he had mastered what he conceived to be a knotty point, and, having done so, was engaged in the delightful fruition of his labour, that of reducing to method and form and particular application the general principles which he conceived governed the case.

"Really, Mr. Walker, I am very busy, and, excuse me, I cannot be interrupted."

"I am off at a word, sir," said Walker, with his characteristic frankness; "but I come upon the most important business I was ever engaged in, and I am sure you will think it sufficiently important to warrant this interruption."

"I am sure," said the Sheriff, "you would not be so pressing if you did not think so. Walk in and be seated," glancing at Percy Lockhart, who stood beside him.

"Permit me first to introduce to you Mr. Percy Lockhart, brother of your friend, Sir George."

The Sheriff suddenly rose with some surprise. He had heard occasionally of Percy Lockhart; but as he himself did not belong to the county, and as he had only come to his official dignity within the last few years, he did not know much of the personal history of the Lockhart family. He understood that the brothers were not

on terms of intimacy—nay, that there was no communication between them. He therefore looked with some curiosity at the person before him, marvelling a good deal at what might have brought him into his presence so unexpectedly. He received Lockhart, however, with all courtesy. Dismissing his amanuensis, he requested his visitors to be seated, and informed them that he was ready to learn how he could be of service. Walker came to the point at once, finishing his short narrative by placing the draft of the important deed in the Sheriff's hands.

The Sheriff had listened with undisguised interest. He eagerly took the deed, and, without saying a word, read it rapidly from beginning to end, passing over the more formal clauses, and fixing upon the really important provisions.

Having finished his perusal, he addressed his visitors, after a short pause. "I am not

so rude as to say I am sorry for this; but Sir George Lockhart and I are on intimate terms, and if the deed should turn up, you must be aware that it will be a very painful thing to him and his family. But to the point. What do you expect me to do? I suppose, Mr. Walker, you are this gentleman's legal adviser, and it is premature to come to me."

Walker informed him of his scruples, and of the awkward position in which he found himself. Being confidential agent for Sir George, he was averse to lend himself to proceedings which might so seriously affect his fortunes; at the same time he explained why he did not think it proper that he should have any communication with Sir George until such precautions had been taken as to guard against the possibility of Mr. Percy Lockhart's rights being thereby compromised. "I must speak plainly," he continued. "If

Sir George were apprised of the existence of the deed and of its place of concealment, and if, afterwards, no deed were found, I need not say that suspicions most injurious and unfair might be the result. I think the best thing for Sir George's character is to go at once—this day—to propose a search for the deed. Indeed, I think we should proceed to Rosemount immediately. The sooner the matter is settled, the better for all parties."

Lockhart was strongly averse to this course. He declared his perfect confidence in his brother's honour, declaring also that he had not the slightest hesitation in leaving the search to himself. He expressed his extreme unwillingness to enter Sir George's house on such an errand, begging very earnestly that his presence might be dispensed with. But the Sheriff was inexorable.

"It is a painful matter both for me and Mr. Walker," said he. "You must just share the burden with us. I am as convinced as you are of Sir George's honour. It is to save it from all suspicion that I must insist on the course Mr. Walker has proposed. I would myself willingly be spared my share in the matter, but you and Mr. Walker have dragged me into it, and," continued he, smiling, "you must drag me out of it."

There was no retreating. Lockhart began almost to wish that he had not stirred in the matter. He looked forward to a meeting with his brother with feelings of inexpressible repugnance. He had so long considered such a meeting in this world impossible that he could scarcely realize to himself his present position. It was therefore with feelings of great reluctance that he placed himself in the post-chaise along with the

Sheriff and Mr. Walker, to learn the issue of the extraordinary intelligence he had received. Chalmers was also summoned to follow them in a separate conveyance. All set out for Rosemount with feelings which over-mastered the curiosity which the object of their errand could not fail to excite. Lockhart felt that there was a necessity for outward calmness and composure at least. By the time that the party arrived at the well-known gate, though his heart did rise at seeing the old arms and the family motto carved in the arch, yet he betrayed no visible sign of emotion; and even though he had, both his companions were too much occupied with their own thoughts to have observed it. It was frightful though to beard his brother, and such a brother, in his own house, and with such a purpose. He almost felt that the proceeding was unjust, even supposing the deed to be all right. Sir George had

been so fearfully deceived, and he was about to be so fearfully enlightened. But if the deed was *not* found, what would his own position be? If, on a search being frankly accorded and made, no such document could be discovered! He felt he was prematurely anxious for another, while his own situation was by far the most embarrassing. He could not help thinking of the figure he would cut in the very probable event of the will having been destroyed; but it was too late to recede. The game *must* be played out, and lost or won.

No man was ever more surprised or, perhaps, less pleased than Sir George Lockhart, when his visitors were announced; for the Sheriff had sent forward the keeper of the porter's lodge, intimating the visit. When he saw the party descend from their vehicles, he felt convinced that something of great importance had happened, but not

the slightest probable conjecture could he form as to its nature or application to himself. His feelings towards his brother were not those of hatred; but the long estrangement which had subsisted between them made it almost impossible that anything like the common affection of kindred should continue to exist. He cared for almost no one but his own family, a son and three daughters. His wife had been a most careful woman in all things concerning money, which suited and pleased him entirely.

The Sheriff and his companions were shown into Sir George's private room. In a little time, Sir George entered. He bowed to the party generally,—rather stiffly and coldly, as if with some presentiment that they had come there for no good. Having desired them to be seated, he himself took a chair, with his back to the light, and calmly and courteously enough desired to be in-

formed to what he owed the honour of the visit. The Sheriff looked to Walker, and Walker to the Sheriff. Neither had till now estimated the true difficulty and awkwardness of their position. The man with whom both were so intimate sat before them, unconscious of the stroke impending over him. It was no wonder that both naturally enough shrunk from the task of inflicting it.

Percy Lockhart unexpectedly came to their relief. He had recovered his complete self-possession. Time had long ago softened down every bitter feeling which he had entertained towards his brother. He had learned to look upon their relationship as an accident, and now that he found himself face to face with him, and witnessed the cool, unmoved demeanour, which reminded him of the unbending sternness of past years, he felt that he owed it to himself to be equally regardless of ties which his brother had

despised, and equally tenacious of rights which he had not scrupled to avail himself of to the letter. All embarrassment vanished. He at once entered upon the subject of their visit, explaining how he had brought the Sheriff and Mr. Walker into their present disagreeable position, and how he felt it to be his duty to spare them the task of communicating what they knew must, in the circumstances, be as unpleasant as it was unexpected. He then, in as few words as possible, related Chalmers's story, and requested the Sheriff to show Sir George the draft of the deed upon which so much might depend. The Sheriff, greatly relieved at finding himself discharged from a most disagreeable duty, placed the draft, without comment, into Sir George's hands. It was not difficult to perceive that he was greatly moved. It is easy to preserve stoicism and indifference in the small affairs of life, but

those very stoics become weaker than other men when anything very serious occurs. "The noblest Roman of them all" did not hear of Portia's death with more composure than Sir George of his father's death when announced, nor would even the death of his wife have beaten him from his cold and stern equanimity; but the man who touched his purse touched not "trash," but that idol of his affections an injury to which it would have been a kind of impiety to bear unmoved. He perused the draft with ill-dissembled trouble, and as the bearers of evil tidings seldom escape their contagion, he immediately began to look upon the party as plotters and conspirators against the dearest interests of his life. But he was a man of sense, which even avarice could not subdue. He felt the necessity of maintaining some sort of dignity in his demeanour. He felt also it was for him to break a silence

singularly embarrassing for all. He did so, if not without emotion, yet with no more than what was natural in the circumstances.

"I suppose I need not say," he began, "that I had not the slightest idea of the existence of this document, and I cannot help remarking that its existence might have been communicated to me in another manner"—glancing indignantly at the party. "Sir David"—there was some bitterness in his tone—"never, I believe, intimated to any one the resolve expressed in this draft. I know nothing of the deed itself, but I shall of course cause a search to be made for it, and acquaint any one you may choose to appoint with the result."

Walker and the Sheriff had recovered their presence of mind. Neither of them relished the tone and temper of Sir George's speech. Walker had great interests at stake. A breach with Sir George would deprive him

of great influence in the burgh, as well as of great professional emolument, but he was one of the few legal practitioners who preferred independence to both; so he replied at once to Sir George, firmly, but quite respectfully. "We were most unwilling," he said, "the Sheriff and myself, to intrude upon you in this matter, and especially in the sudden manner of which I understand you to complain; but both the Sheriff and I thought your honour required that the first intimation of the intelligence should be made in the way we have done. I must do your brother the justice to say that he differed with us; but we are acting to the best of our judgment, and we both think that the search ought to be made in our presence, and at once. If no deed is found in the place indicated, we shall conclude that Sir David had destroyed it, and immediately relieve you of our presence, without thinking any farther

search necessary; but I need not say that if we leave you, and you send us word that no deed can be found, you may be liable—I am convinced most undeservedly so—to great and irreparable misconstruction. It was respect for your own honour which impelled us to the course we have taken."

"You have been very careful of my honour," said Sir George, sarcastically. "Mr. Walker has expressed your opinion also, I am to conclude?" addressing himself to the Sheriff; "and this—this gentleman?" alluding to Chalmers.

"I have no hesitation in saying," replied the Sheriff, "that I agree entirely with Mr. Walker. Permit me to add, I was in hopes that you yourself would approve of the course we have thought it our duty to take."

There was no escape. Sir George was greatly troubled. We cannot tell what his intentions were in wishing to defer the

search; it is a question if he knew them himself. The whole matter had been so sudden, so unexpected and extraordinary, that he might be forgiven if he was not sufficiently master of himself to see his proper course clearly. But he saw plainly that his character was at stake, and that a very little thing might destroy that which he valued next to money in the eyes of the public for life.

"What like was this desk you speak of?" said he, turning to Chalmers, in his old judicial style, and preparing himself for an examination.

"It is there," said Chalmers, pointing at once to an old writing-desk, bound with strong brass bands, lying beneath a side table. "The secret drawer is within it. If it be opened, I can show the place."

This was bringing things to a conclusion, with a vengeance! A few minutes would

now decide the most important interest Sir George Lockhart had ever had at stake, but there was no resiling, as he would technically have called it. The dreaded desk, to him now dressed with all the terrors of the fabled receptacle of human diseases, was placed on the table and opened.

Nothing was seen but bundles of old papers and accounts of no value. There was no appearance of any secret drawer; but Chalmers, when appealed to, pointed out a continuation of the wood towards the bottom of the desk, below the place usually appropriated for pens and sealing-wax, and declared that concealed the receptacle where the deed was deposited. On close examination this appeared probable, but the spring which concealed the fastening could not be discovered. Neither could Chalmers point it out; but of course this was mere matter of delay. Amidst intense anxiety the place

was broken up, every creak of the yielding timber going to Sir George's heart like a knife. And the deed was found!

It was evening before Lockhart returned to Bankhead Cottage. It was one of those quiet hours when the pulse of Nature beats softly, when the cloud sleeps motionless in its azure bed, and when the restlessness of the deep ocean is perceived only by a small white fringe where it meets its brother element in wrath, for it is never altogether peace between them—the wave dashing at the hard rock, and breaking itself to pieces against its unyielding adversary, but occasionally achieving a victory in the fall of some battered fragment which has held out for a hundred years, now to be swallowed up by its enemy, which will never cease its ravages until it has swallowed up all. Lockhart observed the quietness of the evening, which offered such a contrast with his own

troubled thoughts; for great changes, either for good or evil, are always attended with trouble of some kind. In cases of sudden and unexpected good fortune, the mind for a while distrusts its own happiness, and must have time to settle down into the certainty of possession. Who knows but that the stroke which so suddenly gave joy may not be followed by another as suddenly to destroy it? It is only after a time that a burst of joy settles down into a measured contentment. Lockhart felt that his sudden acquisition of a great estate, and his restoration to high rank and position among his countrymen, were events of importance enough to agitate the best-regulated mind. It was when he entered his garden, and perceived Florence and Philip, that the full value of his good fortune was first appreciated. His daughter could now enter the family of Charteris with fortune as befitting her rank as her rank was

befitting her excellence and beauty. He could not now be fonder and prouder of Florence than he had been, but he could now gratify his pride and affection by raising their object to that sphere which was her legitimate right.

Florence saw that something had happened, for her father was too deeply moved not to affect the outward expression.

"What is it?" said Florence at once. "I am sure you have something to tell. We are not going to London, dear papa?"

"No, Florence, not to London. I have something of importance to communicate. Nay," said he to Philip, who made a motion to retire, "you must stay; you are as much interested as any one in what I have to say. Come into the bower and be seated, and be not alarmed—my news is not bad."

When they were all seated, Lockhart resumed the conversation. "I do you the

justice to think," said he, addressing Philip, "that what I have to communicate will not at present much affect you, but it will gratify your parents, I am sure, and it ought to do so. Florence is no longer the portionless girl they were disinterested enough to welcome as a daughter, neither am I any longer the plain Mr. Warren whom you were content to become so nearly connected with." He then, in a few words, told them the unexpected events of the last two days, and the very different position in which they had placed him. Both Florence and Philip were greatly surprised. Florence was highly gratified. She had never doubted either of Philip's or his parents' perfect satisfaction with the proposed union, notwithstanding the disparity of fortune and the apparent inequality of rank. These had never been alluded to by any of the parties concerned. Lockhart knew his daughter to be a priceless

gift to any man, and both Philip and his parents agreed with him; but who is there among us who cares not somewhat—nay, a good deal—for the opinion of the world? They all felt that, in its eyes, the marriage between the heiress of Glenthorn and Philip Charteris would appear a very different thing from that of plain Miss Warren and that high-born gentleman. It was on Philip's account that Florence was chiefly pleased. He would have a wife equal to him in birth and fortune, entitled to take her place beside him.

Lockhart resumed. "What pleases me most is, that this change will, I hope, now prevent the necessity of separation between Florence and me, to which, I confess, I could not reconcile myself. Glenthorn is large enough and handsome enough for two separate establishments, for we must preserve our perfect independence. We shall

divide the old house. The old man will take a comfortable wing of it, and leave the rest for you. But"—looking at Philip—"say at once if this be agreeable to you, and speak without hesitation. I do not assume the slightest right to urge it upon you."

Philip declared nothing could be more satisfactory to him. Florence was wild with joy. The proposed separation between her and her father had been a cruel drawback on her happiness. It had been her chief reason for putting off the marriage so long. She could not make up her mind to leave the dear old Cottage, and its still dearer tenant, without first passing many happy days in her old position. This had been hinted to Philip, and he had respected the feeling, being quite aware of what he was about to deprive her father of. But the new arrangement smoothed all difficulties. Both Philip and Lockhart joined in urging a

much earlier day for the marriage than what had been anticipated.

"Allow me for once, gentlemen," said Florence, "to appeal to a much better authority than either of you. I shall be guided in this matter by Lady Charteris; she is the best judge."

And they were satisfied. Lady Charteris, when appealed to, and having, as they say in court, heard parties, appointed rather a distant day, having, we suspect, been tampered with in private by some irresistible influence. And Philip was not satisfied, but he was obliged to submit.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Sir George made no attempt to challenge the validity of the document so unexpectedly discovered. He knew it would be in vain. Though the loss to him was great, he could have suffered a greater without experiencing any pecuniary inconvenience. But his son was inconsolable. He looked upon the rightful heir of Glenthorn as little else than a robber, who had despoiled him of his lawful patrimony. The loss destroyed all the calculations which he had been secretly making of his future wealth and possessions. He had to begin again, and make these on a considerably reduced scale. Even Sir George was disgusted at the fretful and querulous nonsense of his son, not being in a temper of

mind to listen to useless and irritating complaints. He told him, rather sharply, that unless he could alter the law of the land, he was losing his time in vain repinings.

"But," said the son, "you might try and frighten him into a compromise by threatening to go to law. If you offer him the half, I dare say he would take it."

"He might as well try to frighten me into a compromise by offering to take the half of Rosemount. His deed is as good as mine, and you forget he has given up all claim for bygone rents. Suppose I were to threaten him, and he were in return to prosecute for the rents I have drawn from Glenthorn, how would you like that?" asked he, bitterly. "There is but one way for you to get possession of Glenthorn, and that is by marrying his daughter."

"And a very good way, too," said the son.

"Ay," returned Sir George; "but it is probable you might not succeed. I hear that a son of Sir Robert Charteris has been paying his addresses to her. If he be the youth I saw attending them at the races, he is a very likely man to win the prize, if he has not won it already."

Lady Lockhart had hitherto taken no part in the discussion. Perhaps she felt the misfortune which had befallen them as much as Sir George or her son. She had married in the settled conviction that she was to be Lady of Rosemount and Glenthorn. Being deprived of Glenthorn, she had some dim idea that she had been cheated out of her rights. But she liked the idea of the marriage. It was the only possible way to retain some connexion with the grand old family estate. So she proposed that Sir George should write to his brother, and invite him and his daughter to Rosemount, since

better could not be done. Then the heiress would be out of the way of the Charteris family, and their son might win the lady, and keep the property in the family.

Sir George began to think the plan not so bad. Like many men who live almost entirely shut up with their own families, he was apt to be very much guided by their advice. Besides, the heir of Rosemount was a good match for any lady in the county; but when he looked at the greedy lad, and reflected on the reports he had heard of the high-minded and beautiful girl now heiress of Glenthorn, he was forced to admit to himself that his son's chance of success in this great matrimonial venture was not great. There was worse than this,—he could not forget that he had virtually turned his brother out of his house. It was far from likely that his brother would forget this circumstance. He was mean enough in

many things, but he hesitated to send an invitation which he could not help suspecting would be declined.

But self-interest very often overcomes self-respect. So Sir George wrote a long letter to his brother. He said he would not allude to old misunderstandings and grievances; they were past. For his part, he was willing they should be forgotten. No doubt he might have been to blame; if so, he was sorry for it, and he could say no more. But he was now an older and, he trusted, a wiser man than when they first parted. He did not hesitate to say that he had often regretted the estrangement which had taken place; he would do more, he would willingly be the first to ask for a reconciliation, which he thought would be as pleasant to them both as it would appear becoming in the eyes of the world. After many such "holiday and lady terms," he concluded by

inviting his brother and niece to Rosemount, where at present none but his own family were residing.

Mr. Percy Lockhart was a good deal amused by the letter; he thought he could perceive its drift. Though his indignation at his brother's conduct had long ago died away, yet he would not stoop to affect the cordiality of kinsmanship with one who had so unscrupulously and cruelly disregarded all claims of blood and brotherhood. So he wrote him at once, and frankly said that he could not imitate Sir George's example in forgetting the past, although he had not the slightest angry feeling connected with it; but he thought that a brother who had thrust him from the house of their father, for no offence or crime, could not expect the return of him who had been so dismissed. The bond of brotherhood had been deliberately set aside and destroyed by him,

Sir George, and the writer could not consent to its again being made binding. Neither he nor his daughter could accept the invitation to Rosemount.

So Sir George's hopes were destroyed. His lady and his son had entertained no doubt of the invitation being graciously and gratefully received, and both were deeply mortified at the result. Sir George soon heard of Florence and Philip's engagement for certain, so he remarked to Lady Lockhart and his son that the visit would have been merely trouble and expense for no purpose, so it was as well they had not come.

## CHAPTER XIV.

We left Sam Burn and Tom Watson starting off on a fishing excursion, the latter in a state of ecstatic delight, and anticipating most deadly doings on their arrival at the Esk.

"What a glorious day for sport, Sam!" said the enthusiastic young man.

"The day 's guid eneuch," was the careless answer, for Sam did not approve of such very young gentlemen expressing such decided opinions on important matters.

"Good enough!" exclaimed the lad, indignantly; "why, after the rain, and with this thick atmosphere, there never *was* such a day—and the may-fly will be on. Sam, wont the may-fly be on?"

"Ow ay, I daursay the may-flee will be on; but we're rather late o' startin', an' there will be folk thrashin' the water before us. We'll see at the toll if ony o' them hae passed."

They pulled up at the turnpike, and asked the keeper of the gate if any one had gone before them to the stream they were bound for.

"Ay, ay," said the man, "I'se warrant that; there's Captain Atkins, an' Pinder the banker, and his son—three in a gig; and Constable the baker an' Pie Tam were there last night."

"The beggars!" said Sam, indignantly; "an' what part are they for?"

"Lundie brig," answered the toll-man.

"Naething else wad sair them," grumbled our friend. "Weel, Maister Tammas, they have gottin' the best part o' the water, but it's no' aye them 'at gets the best part 'at

gets the maist fish; but we needna follow them; we'll turn aff at the mill o' the west mains, and put up the naig at Annie's boat-hoose, an' we'll hae the water there to oursels. I suppose there 's no' mony likes that bit, for it's a still water, except at Wattie's pool an' the poopit, an' I'll leave that bit to you."

"That's the thing, Sam; let's be off, man," and the bay mare bounded off like a shot.

"The brute's mair contrairy than ever," said Sam.

"I say, Sam, I can drive that mare beautifully, for all that Mr. Walker says. I drove her to Drumly burn and back again about a fortnight ago, and she went with me like a lamb."

"Nae doot," was the laconic reply.

"Well then, Sam, there 's a good fellow, let me drive to the boat-house," urged Tom, coaxingly; "and you know, if she were

setting off, you could have the reins in a second."

"It 's nae use speakin' that way, Maister Tammas; you heard my orders. If you ance lost that jaud's head, I couldna get it again. It 's a' I can do to keep it now, the pullin' deevil that she is," and he resisted all entreaties to part with the reins for an instant.

Mr. Thomas was obliged to acquiesce; but a very short time brought them to the water's side, and the bay mare was quickly put up and forgotten.

The water was in prime order, and the may-fly, or green drake, was on. Every now and then a dull plunge was heard, accompanied by circling waves, which showed where the trout were feeding. The water was all alive.

"We'll tak' the side the wind blaws frae," said Sam. "Drap your flee a little above

whare you see a troot feedin', an' lat it come quietly ower him. Stand weel back, and lat the wind carry your line; you needna cast; stand as far back as you can; troots dinna like to see folk at the end o' a lang stick."

Tom followed Sam's directions, and succeeded in capturing some very fine trout. They were feeding greedily, and every fisher knows that there is no time so deadly as when the may-fly is on. Sam had left the streamy part of the water to Tom, and strolled down to a place where it was quite smooth, and which was much more difficult to fish; but Sam could throw a fly though the water was like glass, and scarce make a crack in the mirror when the line fell. In about an hour he had a very pretty picture in his basket,—trouts huddled together like great pieces of tortoise-shell and gold lying among fresh green rushes. He was giving play to

a very fine trout when he heard a terrific shout from Tom, who was some hundred yards above him. "Sam! Sam! Sam!" was repeated at the top of his lungs.

"What the mischief's the matter wi' the laddie noo, I winder," said Sam to himself; and having succeeded in landing his trout, he began to walk up the water. "Sam! Sam!" again shouted Tom, in accents of genuine despair, and Sam quickened his pace to a run. When he came within a hundred yards of his young companion, he saw the reason of the outcry, and understood the urgency of the case. A salmon which Tom had hooked with his trout-fly sprung out of the water, and the lad, with his frail tackle, was at his wits' end how to manage it.

"Tak' care, tak' care," said Sam, running up; "keep your line licht an' nae mair; that slim gear will no' bear a strain. Vera

weel dune," said he, as the salmon again sprung out of the water, and Tom raised and lowered his rod with the spring and the descent. "Vera weel dune, but there's no muckle chance o' landin' him. You 've nae purchase (power) on him wi' that bit wand (rod) and that tackle."

"Sam, do you take the rod," said the lad, trembling with excitement; "I shall never land him."

"Na, na," said Sam; "it's grand practice; he's for doon the water—rin, rin wi' him—gie nae mair line than you can help." And the fish struck down the water, little impeded in his course by the slight strain which Tom could venture to keep upon him. Tom ran, and Sam along with him, advising and cautioning and encouraging, till the fish again slackened his pace, and the two excited sportsmen awaited his farther operations. The line cut slowly through the

water, and every motion of the fish thrilled through the lad's body like an electric shock. At last the line ceased to move, and the rod to vibrate—there was a dead stand-still. "What 's the matter now, Sam," said Watson, a little alarmed.

"He 's sulkin' at the boddim," answered Sam. "Lat him sulk there—there 's some chance noo, if the flee haud the grip. Stand quite still for five minutes, an' I 'll may be sort him yet." And he sat down on the bank, and took out his old tattered book, while Tom stood scarcely daring to breathe lest he should prematurely disturb the noble prey which he would have given all he was worth to land.

Sam was not idle. He took from his book three large pike hooks, and fastened them to a strong piece of whip-cord, in the shape of a grappling, leaving a piece of the cord to extend beyond the hooks. To this he

attached a sinker; he then rose up and prepared for business.

"And now," said he, "Mr. Tammas, stand by till I waukin' him up, and mind what you are aboot when he sets aff. He's got second wind noo, and he'll gie you trouble, you may depend on't; but if we get into the shallow water we may manage him." And Sam, taking off the point of his own rod, poked in the direction of the fish. Off the fish darted up the stream, making the spray flee up the line as it cut the water, keeping Tom and Sam running their best along the bank of the river. Again he sprung six feet out of the water, trying to break the line with his tail. "Weel dune again," cried Sam in enthusiastic approbation of the way in which Tom managed his rod, "but I doot, I doot, the play canna last lang wi' that tackle. Deil's in him, he's makin' for the reeds, an' it's a' up." And

Sam, in despair, caught up a large stone, and flung it dexterously between him and the reeds he had mentioned. The fish turned from them, and went straight up the water. "He 's makin' for the poopit," cried Sam; "if we get him on the sandy shallow, we 'll sort him."

The poopit was a large pool, deep at the farther side of the river, where the current was rapid and strong. On the sportsmen's side there was a beautiful sandy shallow, where the water eddied slowly upwards. The salmon rushed desperately into the pool, and before he was aware dashed himself aground with his back above water. Sam, with unerring hand, threw his grappling over him, and with a sudden jerk fixed it firmly immediately below the gills. He was on the sandy shelf in an instant.

"There," said Sam; "what do you think

o' yoursel' noo? A twal pund fish, if he 's an ounce."

"Think!" said the delighted Tom; "I would not change places with the Lord President of the Court of Session."

"The Lord President!" observed Sam, with great contempt; "a bonny hand he would mak' at landin' a saumont!"

And having measured the fish, and admired it with that admiration which only a man who recollects catching his first salmon can estimate, Tom tried to stow it into his basket, but it was much too small for such a large fish, and do what he could, the tail stuck out nearly a foot.

They had scarcely got it safely secured, when Sam raised the alarm. "Lordsake, there 's Archie Steel!" exclaimed he, with great disgust.

"And who is Archie Steel, and who cares for him?" asked Tom, with great indifference.

"He's the tacksman o' the saumont fisheries, an' he's seen your fish, an' is comin' to claim it. It's lucky he's on the wrang side o' the water, and he disna ken you. Ay, ay, there he comes, an' noo for a bleeze!"

"What's that you've got in your basket, my young chap?" cried he, addressing himself to Tom.

"You'll be sayin' it's a saumont," answered Sam.

"It is a salmon," asserted Archie Steel, in great wrath.

"I thocht you would be sayin' that," retorted Sam; "to think o' a man o' your experience no kennin a sea-trout frae a saumont!"

"What's your name, sir?" demanded the angry tacksman of the young man, disdaining to take any notice of Sam's impertinence.

"He 's my auldest son; what do you think o' him?" said the undaunted Sam.

"Let the chap answer for himself," roared Archie Steel.

"He 's gottin the cauld, and canna be roarin' across the water," Sam explained; but the explanation apparently gave no satisfaction, for the tacksman, without saying another word, began to walk rapidly down the water.

"Ow ay," said Sam; "he 's aff for the ford, and he 'll be back to kick up a row; but it 's a gude mile doon, and we 'll be a' safe afore he can come here. I think we 'll be aff; we have had plenty o' fish for ae day."

"But Sam," said Tom, somewhat ruefully; "I suspect the man has a right to the fish."

"He has paid nae rent for twa years," was Sam's ready answer; "an' he 's to be put oot o' the fishins next year."

"Oh, if he has paid no rent, that is quite another thing," answered Tom, not very difficult to be persuaded of the correctness of Sam's views. They hastily took down their rods, and made off from Mr. Steel's farther examinations and inquiries.

## CHAPTER XV.

Wrong never comes right.—THEODORE HOOK.

MANY years have fled since we left Walter Davidson. Those years were passed in that dull monotony of misery from which he knew there was to be no change in this world. He was then in the prime of life, and he was not an old man now, but his head was grey and his face worn. The heart was more worn still. Many a sore and weary throb had it given, until the restless organ became diseased, and Davidson became aware of the fact without emotion. It was beating him to death; be it so. Repentance, deep and sincere, had not induced him to perform the only act of justice which could modify his

crime. But he had made a kind of compromise with himself, and he almost cheated himself into the belief that it was as much as could be expected of him. In his will, which he wrote with his own hand, he had left all the money he had saved to the bank, with a full confession of the wrong which he had committed. Justice he thought would be done at last, so he felt more at ease after he had signed and sealed and locked up the document than he had done since his memorable parting with his brother. What had become of him since their parting? He had never heard a word of him,—he had never written, for that might have been dangerous. He must be dead. But there was not a day that he did not think of him. The whole history was, in fact, ever present to his mind —the first embarrassment—the first robbery —the flight and bankruptcy of James Davidson—the trial and condemnation of

poor Chalmers, those were all photographed upon his memory, and ever flashing into light, sometimes getting dull with the very fatigue of thinking about them, but starting out with full force and activity at the slightest allusion to similar events. He was very weary of existence, at the same time that he dreaded the idea of death; he would not have been so unhappy if he had been a worse man. It was the good in him which caused his misery. His own soul was always sitting in judgment upon itself. When was the real trial to take place? Ay! the future was as certain as the past.

He was sitting alone—he was always alone in the evening—when his housekeeper came to say that a person wished to speak with him.

"A person! What kind of a person?"

"A tall man, sir. He says his name is Chalmers, and that you would know." Ay,

that name set the heart agoing; but there was no avoiding the meeting. He must see him, and hear what he had to say, and the sooner the better. "Show him up."

He heard the footstep coming slowly upstairs. The door was opened, and Richard Chalmers once more stood face to face with his old master, but his bearing was very different from what it had been on the day of the lost money.

Walter Davidson had sat still while Chalmers was coming upstairs. He still continued to sit when he entered. He motioned his visitor to be seated, but Chalmers remained standing. Davidson was the first to speak.

"Well, Chalmers, to what do I owe this visit? I hardly expected it."

"I dare say not. I dare say it is not a welcome visit," said Chalmers. "I came to speak of some old matters, and to settle them. There is an old account between us.

You were wont not to like old, unsettled accounts."

"This is singular language," answered the manager, coldly. "I should think the recurrence to any old matters between us would not be very agreeable to you; but as you like. What old matters?"

"My trial for robbing the bank, and my condemnation."

"Indeed! I should think these strange subjects for you to choose to discuss with me; but go on, I shall hear you patiently," and he looked his unwelcome visitor steadily in the face. But he was met by a gaze as steady and more stern.

"You once said you believed I was an innocent man," said Chalmers.

"I did. That was before the story of your gambling came out. Do you think that was not sufficient to change my opinion? It changed that of many."

"Did it change yours?"

It was a home thrust, but he parried it well.

"No," he answered, "it did not. I did believe you innocent. I believe so still. But what can I do for you? You know how I spoke in your favour at the trial."

"I have not forgotten."

"And you know I spoke in vain."

"I know you spoke in vain; but you might have spoken with more effect."

"I do not understand you," said Davidson, a little shaken. "Speak plainly, and tell me what you want. If it is assistance, I shall give it willingly," and he pulled out his purse.

"No," said Chalmers, "not that—I would starve first; and you know it."

The storm was about to burst at last. Well, let it burst. It had slumbered long enough. When it came to action, the

manager's heart never failed him. He looked Chalmers inquiringly in the face, as if at a loss to discover his meaning. "Starve first," he repeated, "and why? Are you ashamed to receive assistance from an old friend?"

"Yes."

"Again I ask, why?"

"And I say, ask your own heart, and I say it will tell you—and I say it has told you already."

Davidson felt more himself than he had done for years. He had a man to deal with now. He had realities. It was like awaking from a frightful dream—from shadowy terrors to a visible and mortal and manageable enemy.

He told Chalmers again that he did not understand him. "And now, once for all," continued he, with a little more animation. "if you did not come for assistance, what did you come for?"

"Justice!" said Chalmers.

"If a judge and jury believed you guilty, and acted on the belief, how am I to render you justice?"

"Because you know, and you know better than judge and jury."

"I must cut this matter short," said the manager, a little impatiently. "I pity you from my soul, and I am willing to give you any assistance you may require. I think you should remove to some distant place—I shall give you the necessary means. I can do no more."

"You must do more than that—must and shall. As you said, I shall cut this matter short. You, Walter Davidson, took the money—took it for your own private purposes. I challenge you before God!"

Davidson deigned to answer only by a contemptuous laugh.

"I could pity you," said Chalmers; "on

my soul, I could almost pity you, notwithstanding the years of misery and disgrace which you caused me; but I have suffered too much already; while you, the cause, have been in the enjoyment — No," checking himself, "I see you have suffered, too—perhaps more than I, but I cannot spare you."

"This is rather too insolent. You must leave my house, Richard Chalmers. I think you are mad. Who on earth possessed you with such an idea?"

"Henry Cockburn, my counsel, first; but we had no proof then."

"And you have proof now?"

"I have proof now!"

What could the man mean? Proof! Pshaw, the thing was impossible! He hardened himself in self-defence, and was about to address Chalmers angrily, but the latter interrupted him.

"Hush!" said he; "no more perjuries—they cannot save you. Your brother is this night in Thriveport. I know all!"

"Ah!"

There was a long pause. "I have no desire for vengeance," at last said Chalmers, "but I cannot spare you. I cannot consent to bear the character of a thief longer. I have your brother's declaration, given before a magistrate this evening. He is at the point of death."

The manager made no answer; but he rose, and pointed sternly to the door. Chalmers looked at him as sternly, and walked slowly out. Davidson heard the street-door shut behind him, and was left to his own thoughts.

And so all the years of torture had been suffered in vain! The restless days and feverish nights! This crime, like a debt, had been going on increasing at interest and compound interest, until the amount was

frightful to contemplate. Ay! everything bears its proper fruit, good and evil. The seed may be long in the ground out of sight, but it will germinate in time and appear. Davidson had thought the crime lay buried in his own heart; and here, all at once, like a spectre, had sprung up the avenger, in that emaciated but still vigorous form. He would fight no longer.

There is no proof, whispered the demon; your brother's word is not worth a feather's weight in any court or any society. Be a man, and deny the whole thing as a reckless calumny. Your character will stand the attacks of a fraudulent bankrupt and a convicted felon. What! lose the game now, after playing it so bravely!

But the demon whispered this time in vain: Davidson felt that his brother's word would be taken. A man at the point of death, even a bad man, how suddenly he gets credit for

speaking the truth! He is speaking almost within sight of the judgment-seat. Yes, his brother's word would be taken.

The demon whispered again—he was successful this time. He sat down and buried his face in his hands, as though to shut out the familiar objects around him. They were his only friends on earth. He thought long—not so much of what he was to do, that was settled. He thought of old times, when he had seen his brother the life and soul of convivial parties—of the bright laughing young man, now in the custody of death, and bearing testimony against him before God. He looked back upon the whole procession of his life, and here was the end!

It struck ten: the bell had the same sound, hale tone in which it spoke so many years ago,—strange, that! And the same echoes replied to it, and as clearly as ever,—very

strange! It was the last time he would listen to that discourse. What next?

It was Saturday night. He rang the bell for his old housekeeper.

"Janet," said, he "I am fatigued to-night, and shall take a long rest to-morrow morning. Go to church as usual, and do not wait for me at breakfast. Good-night, Janet."

"Good-night, sir! God bless you!"

Old Janet's words went straight to his heart. "Ay, God bless me!"

He opened a drawer and took out his mother's picture, which he had not seen for many years. He looked at it long. How calm and serene! He hung it up at the foot of his bed. It was a foolish fancy: he thought it would plead for him when he lay there.

He opened another drawer, and took out a small phial. He had kept it for some time.

It struck twelve. Time spoke to Walter Davidson no more!

It was known next day that he was dead. The faithful housekeeper waited long for his appearance, and at last became alarmed, when she recollected his injunctions not to disturb him in the morning. She went upstairs and listened. All was still. Something was wrong. She knocked at the door. No answer; so she opened the door. Ay, all was still, indeed! A glance at the pale face, at the picture, at the phial, and the whole story was told. But it would be told to no one else. She took up the phial and smelt it. She knew what it was well enough, and she disposed of it so that no one else might fall in with it. There was no investigation; these things are, or were, loosely managed in Scotland, where there is no "Crowner's quest." No one knew that he had dared to anticipate the hand of God in removing himself from this world.

His will told the story of his crime and his sufferings. He left as much money as nearly repaid the Bank.

And Richard Chalmers was known to be an innocent and much-injured man. The Bank offered him money as some compensation for his unmerited wrongs, but he rejected it.

Dick walked to his mother's grave, and sat down and thought of all that had passed. Had he suffered in comparison with Davidson? No. He was still in the prime of manhood, and Lockhart had offered him respectable employment on his estate. *His* name was again spotless before the world. Adversity had made a man of him; he had been taught wisdom, and gained strength by what he had gone through. He left the grave resigned and contented, forgiving all who had wronged him, and ready to begin a new and a happier life.

James Davidson died very shortly after his brother, willing to be delivered from worldly trouble. After his unfortunate flight, no gleam of sunshine ever shot across his path. His own misdeeds had not been very great, but they had been visited more heavily than many great crimes. He had wished to see his brother before he died, and had travelled many weary miles for the purpose of inducing him to do justice to Chalmers. But he fell ill at the end of his journey, and then he felt that, for the first time since his flight, he had regained the right to be believed, for he had no earthly interest to serve by his confession.

The brothers were buried in the same spot. They had both been stretched on the rack of this "tough world," and many lie beside them whose sin and sorrow only ended at the same place.

## CHAPTER XVI.

'Ban, 'ban, Ca-Caliban
Has a new master—get a new man.

TEMPEST.

SAM was sitting one fine evening before the cottage-door, with all his household pets beside him. Aunty was at her never-ending work of knitting, for Sam's tramping about in all weathers, and in all kinds of ground, rendered the keeping of his stocking department in order no light task. Nick and Dick were in close attendance. Dick, as usual, lethargic and sleepy—he always overate himself, and, like all other gluttons, suffered the consequences in the shape of dyspepsia—his dull, half-closed eye and drooping wing contrasting with Nick's alert,

wide-awake look and shining coat. Nick was looking as sharp as a needle, watching Sam's operations with great interest and curiosity,—now setting his head on this side, now on that, with the knowing expression of a critic ready to detect and challenge any defect in the work. Sam was never idle, or rather his idlest time was his busiest. He was at present employed in working a landing-net, which he did with great skill and expedition. Apparently Nick could find no fault with the manufacture, for he desisted from his inspection, and, ever intent on mischief, set himself to annoy the sleepy gull, whose indolent habits he despised, and whom he very often took the liberty of chastising. But Dick bore no ill will; he recognised in Nick a superior spirit, and submitted. Sam sometimes interfered to prevent any extraordinary act of oppression. In such cases, Nick would pretend utter in-

difference to his meek companion, becoming suddenly highly interested in Captain's tail, which, however, he treated with a respect which experience had taught him to observe. Sam's attention was at present called to a lady and gentleman on horseback, evidently approaching the cottage, for they had left the beaten path, and were clearing the furze bushes with the ease and grace of accomplished riders on English thoroughbreds. Florence and Philip, in youthful confidence, were galloping over the halcyon days of courtship. The riders reined up and alighted: they were both quite at home at Sam's and his aunty's abode. Sam's aunt was no ordinary country wife. She had been bred in a high family, and held a situation of trust and respectability, and so her manners were infinitely above those of her own rank in life. Her long and faithful services had been rewarded by a small annuity, sufficient

for her own and Sam's wants. Her chief subject of regret was that the annuity would die with her. Sam told her she was "likely to be left wi' naething but the siller to trouble her." Sam respected the old lady in his heart; he saw the great difference between her and her neighbours, and in nothing more than the easy, but quite respectful, way in which she received such guests as those who now visited the cottage. It was the first time they had come to see her since their engagement had become known. The kind old dame gave them her blessing in a way which brought tears of joy to Florence's happy eyes. Sam, in his own honest hearty way, wished them, "A' the gude they deserved, and then they would never need to complain." Florence went through the blushing part of the business very creditably, and Philip cordially thanked them both. Dick made a lazy, unwilling hop out of the way,

and Nick seemed to have formed some dishonest design on Florence's riding-whip. Captain pushed his old nose into Philip's hand, and received the caress due to loyalty and old service.

They were all talking merrily save Sam, whose face bore unmistakable marks of that melancholy which so seldom found a resting-place there. At last his aunt asked him what was the matter. "You seem to be sorry, Sam, because everybody else is pleased."

"An' so I am," said Sam; "there are drawbacks in a' mortal schemes, an' dead sorry I am that Mr. Philip and Miss Florence, no' forgettin' the Laird,"—thus he now designated Lockhart—"are goin' away. The place will never look like itself again; that is, like what it has been the last twa years."

"And that's true, Sam" said Mrs. Wilson; "mony a puir creature in the parish will

miss the kind gift, and the kinder word, when that bonny bird is gone," looking at Florence; "but Glenthorn is a bonnier place than this, Sam, and we must rejoice at the happiness of those who have been so kind to us."

"Nae doot o' that," said Sam. "Glenthorn, I'm tauld, is a grand place for gemm and fishin'. What sport you an' the Laird will hae, Mr. Philip!"

"Yes, Sam," said Florence; "and there is nothing to hinder you coming with us to shoot and fish as much as you like. Papa wishes you to come as gamekeeper or forester at Glenthorn, and I wish you to come to our wild country as my special body-guard."

Sam was greatly confounded. Such a dream of promotion to what he considered the first employment in the country had never entered his brain. "Me a forester!"

he exclaimed, in extreme bewilderment; "an' forester o' Glenthorn! I'd rather be that than the king upon his throne, God bless him!—an' God bless you, Miss Florence, for bein' sae kind; but"—and a shade passed over his face—"I doot I'm no' fit for the place. It needs a deal o' edication to be a gemmkeeper; ane micht learn, though?" said he to Philip, inquiringly.

"To be sure, Sam; and it is a kind of learning I should think you particularly qualified to excel in."

A new thought struck Sam. His aunt he could on no account leave, the old dame who had been more than a mother to him; and he looked seriously at the old lady as she sat happy beyond expression at the first prospects of Sam's well-doing which had ever appeared.

"Oh, of course," said Florence, seeing what was passing in Sam's mind, "Mrs.

Wilson, and Nick, and Dick, and Captain, and the whole family, must come to Glenthorn. There is plenty of room for them all, and Mrs. Wilson shall have the best cow on the estate, if I have any influence with the Laird, as you call him."

"I am not surprised at anything you do, Miss Florence," said the old dame. "If I cannot thank you as I ought for your kindness to Sam and me, I regret it the less because I am sure you know what we feel better than I can express it. Blithe will I be to go to Glenthorn. A better place and a better master are not to be found in broad Scotland."

"Then," said Philip, "we may consider the matter as settled. I am sure that Sam may trust to the Laird for all necessary arrangements."

"That will I no'," said Sam, sturdily. "He would be givin' me twice what I am

worth. Ever since that bit snaw business, you an' him hae been just rediculous. That watch wi' your names upon it is fit for a prince. But I'll be imposed upon nae mair; I'se warrant I'll mak a siccar bargain wi' the Laird. But here he comes himsel'; sic a horse and sic a seat, there's no' the like o' in the country side."

And Sam was right. The strong horse bore the strong man as if he had been a feather-weight. In a few minutes he trotted gaily among the party. He greeted the old lady with his usual kindness, and then turned to Sam.

"Well, Sam, I suppose these young tell-tale people have told you of all my plans? What do you say, will you come to be lord of the grouse and blackcock at Glenthorn?"

"An' better Lairdship wid I never wish," said Sam; "only I wid prefer your service, I think, to a real Lairdship. I'll come, sir, an' do my best, tho' I ken I'm no' a' thegither

fit for the place; tho' I ken that if a man does his best, your honour is no' the man to find faut wi' shortcomins; but"—and another doubt rose in Sam's mind—"I wadna like to tak' anither man's place ower his head."

"The present gamekeeper goes of his own accord to Rosemount. I would not have removed him. So you see there is no obstacle in the way of your accepting my offer."

"An' it is a better offer than ever I expected in this world," said Sam. "But Lord, to think o' *me* bein' a gemmkeeper! Set a th—" He checked himself in time for his character.

Lockhart laughed. "And now," said he to the young people, "mount and make you ready. We 'll have a brushing gallop to the Witches' Stone for the last time, for awhile at least, and then home by the sands. Home," said he; "yes, I shall be sorry to leave the

Cottage; but it is in the market, and I think I shall buy it."

"Oh, yes, dear papa," said Florence; "buy the Cottage. The thought of leaving it altogether, where we have been so very happy, was the only unpleasant thought which disturbed me."

## CHAPTER XVII.

Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot
That it do singe yourself.—SHAKSPEARE.

SAM and his Aunty Wilson had long lived happily in their solitary dwelling; but there had been one drawback in their felicity,—I mean one real, substantial drawback. The Cottage was held on lease by Mrs. Wilson, and the lease was about to expire. Various rumours had reached Sam's ears that the landlord would not renew the lease; and he had good reason for believing that the landlord's animosity against his aunty and him arose from certain irregular proceedings of his, Sam's, regarding the game on the Laird of Girniewhins's estate. To do him justice,

he thought more of his aunt than of himself, and after the first hint which he had heard of the probable ejectment, he had refrained from all unlawful pastimes so far as his landlord was concerned, and he had begun to think that his old trespasses had been forgotten or forgiven; but he little knew how retentive was the memory or how patient the resentment of the Laird of Girniewhins. He could bide his time, and even take pleasure in "biding" it, thinking how sweet his paltry revenge would be when it came. We do not excuse Sam: poaching is not far removed from theft; but the idea of such a relationship never entered Sam's head,—and he rather thought that *he* was the injured man, when he was pounced upon by some landed proprietor, and that the latter was the oppressor, and the unjust and grasping possessor of what belonged to every one who had the skill to appropriate it. His friend,

Edmund Walker, had got him out of many a scrape, in consequence of his influence with many of the country gentlemen; but the last time he had rescued him from a bitter prosecution he had fairly given him warning that he would never again interfere in any similar case; and Sam had a notion, from the way he spoke, that he would keep his word. The last time he had come in contact with the Laird of Girniewhins was on a fine October day about two years before this time. Sam was walking very quietly by the side of one of the Laird's plantations, with his gun in his hand, which he carried in that unostentatious way which is generally the way with those who have neither game-certificate nor leave to shoot, keeping a sharp look-out with one eye for birds, and with the other for gamekeepers or sportsmen better privileged than himself, when at a sudden turn of the road he saw

the Laird on horseback, coming straight in his direction. With an instinctive feeling of respect for the Laird, who he knew had a mortal aversion to all unauthorized persons carrying fire-arms on his estate, he instantly pushed his gun under a bush, with the double intention of saving both it and his landlord's feelings; and then, with his hands in his pockets, he began to whistle "Maggie Lauder" with great purity of intonation, with the view, no doubt, of exhibiting to the Laird the serenity of a mind at ease. His music had hardly the effect which he wished to produce.

The Laird trotted leisurely up to Sam, and reined in his horse. "A fine day, Sam," said he courteously.

"A bra' day, Laird. I'm glad you got sic a grand harvest time; there's no' been the like o't for a dizzen o' years."

The Laird received Sam's congratulations

with a Laird's condescension; but he was not one who thought that time should be spent in idle compliments: he had a thought to business in most of his proceedings, especially when engaged with his inferiors.

"Were you coming to the Castle?" (the name of his home farm). "Were you wanting to see me, Sam?" inquired he.

"No," answered Sam, with great sincerity, "I had naething worth troublin' you aboot, Laird."

"Just taking a walk for the benefit of your health?" asked Girniewhins, with great gravity.

"Just that," said Sam, readily. "Dinna let me tak' up your honour's time."

"I'm in no hurry, Sam. I'm just taking a ride for the sake o' *my* health; so you see we're on the same business. Seen any birds, Sam?" asked he carelessly.

"Me! Na; I was na lookin' for birds."

"I dare say not; nor hares, nor rabbits," continued the Laird. "But you wadna be looking for them either, I suppose?"

Sam did not like the turn the conversation had taken, so he thought he would try and change it.

"That's a braw cob your honour's ridin'," said he; "there wasna a beast like that at the last market, an' there were gude anes there too."

"You're a good judge, Sam; the beast is good enough. It's a queer beast, if you knew all about him. Would you believe, Sam, that it can point like a dog?"

"Hoot, Laird, your jokin' noo. I'm no quite sae saft as a' that."

"Saft! no. There's no' a saft bane in your skin, that I believe. But I'm not jokin', an' I'll very soon prove it to you, man. You saw the beast stop here without me drawing bridle," said the Laird, smiling.

"Weel, man, he 's pointing; but he does not point at birds or hares, he only points at guns. I 'll wager a tree to a whinbush that there 's a gun no' far from this. Look about you, Sam; do you see nothing like a gun?"

"Me!" said Sam; "I think I wad look lang eneuch here afore I could see ane."

"Let me look then, said the Laird," dismounting, and walking up straight to Sam's gun. "I kent the beast was right," said he; "and a capital gun it is. Twisted barrels no less, and primed and loaded, and all ready. Many a bird it has brought down, I dare say," continued he, looking quietly at Sam. "Who can it belong to?"

"Couldna say, sir," answered Sam, ruefully enough; "but if you like, I 'll tak' it hame wi' me, and keep it till the owner turn up."

"I 'll take care of that, Sam; and so I think I 'd better take it in my own keep-

ing, not to trouble you. If the owner turn up, as you seem to think possible, tho' I don't, tell him to come to me if he wants his gun. Good day, Sam; take care of your health." And the Laird rode off with the gun, leaving Sam in a state of mind which, to use a new and expressive phrase, may be better imagined than described.

And Sam had kept as much out of the Laird's way as he could ever since the unfortunate occurrence.

A few days after his promotion to the rank of forester and gamekeeper of Glenthorn, and while making some out-of-door arrangements preparatory to removing from his present abode, he was a little surprised to see Girniewhins trotting along the road which led to the Cottage, mounted on the identical cob which had before been the object of Sam's high commendation, and whose accomplishments had been so unex-

pectedly exhibited to him. The Laird halted at the little wooden wicket, and Sam, as in duty and civility bound, approached to know his honour's pleasure. He saluted his landlord with a tenant's civility, but this time he refrained from any complimentary observations about the cob. The Laird opened the conversation.

"Well, Sam, it is a long time since I have seen you. How is Mrs. Wilson?"

"Couldna be better, Laird; thank you for speerin'."

"That's right. But I'm sorry I have bad news for you, and for your aunt, too; but it canna weel be helped."

"An' what may the news be—come awa' wi' them, Laird; better a finger aff than aye waggin, as you justly observed, when you lost your grand plea wi' Downright the driver. He was a clever customer, the driver, as your honour kens," said Sam,

for the gun still "stuck in his gizzard." He could hardly have hit on a more sore point; but the Laird restrained himself, in the full knowledge, as he thought, that he had it in his power to take ample and summary vengeance on his insolent tenant.

"Well, Sam, I have not much time to talk about Downright just now; I came on your business. I came to tell you that your lease expires next term, and that my arrangements will not permit me to renew it;" and he paused to see the effects of this dreadful announcement.

"Is that a' the ill news?" asked Sam, with great indifference. "Hoot, Laird, dinna vex yoursel' aboot that; I was just to give you notice that we were gaun to flit at the next term, if no before it. We had nae great objection to the place, but we have gotten a better; it's but a cauld bit after a': I wish you a guid tenant, Laird."

The Laird was taken aback, but he thought Sam's coolness was an impudent assumption.

"And where are you going? if I may ask," said he.

"I 'm gaun into service," said Sam, with much apparent humility.

The Laird's spirits rose again. "I doubt, I doubt, Sam," said he, "you'll not take with hard work now, for you know you haven't been much accustomed to it. I'm sorry to hear you have come to this?"

"I didna say it was hard wark," said Sam. "It's wark I wad rather do a hundred times than be idle. So dinna be cast doon aboot it, Laird. I'm to be Forester of Glenthorn—you dinna ca' that hard wark, an' to as gude a maister as is in the country, be the ither wha he may. An' sae gude day to you, Laird. Take care o' your health."

The Laird rode away angry and disappointed.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

The change in Lockhart's position was a great and a sudden one,—one of those which fortune indulges so rarely, for wealth seldom comes unlooked or unlaboured for. What are often termed the freaks of fortune are, except at the gaming-table, no more than the calculated efforts of men's operations. There is nothing more wonderful in seeing a poor man become rich than in seeing a shrub become a tree. But Lockhart's good fortune was entirely unforeseen by him, unhinted at by his wildest dreams. He carried his brimming cup with a steady hand, however, and entered on his possessions neither with an affectation of humility nor with any

appearance of avidity or exultation. Sir Robert and Lady Charteris were greatly rejoiced, not so much on account of their son, as they were to see a man so fitted for rank and fortune as Lockhart promoted to their possession. The tenantry had wished to make some display on his taking possession of the house of his fathers, but he strictly forbade it; and though they were disappointed at the rejection of so customary a mark of respect, they soon found it proceeded neither from disdain nor indifference. All were treated with unaffected cordiality, and some had reason before long to congratulate themselves on the change of landlords which had taken place. Sir George had been a hard, exacting man, and his brother did not think fit at once to make any great display of kindness and liberality by way of contrast; but many proceedings against tenants in arrears were allowed to fall asleep, to be

ultimately abandoned, and more than one lease which was about to expire was to be renewed on more favourable terms. It was a time when farms were greatly in demand, and when good farmers with capital were much desired by landlords for the improvement of their estates.

More than one of Sir George's poor struggling tenants had good cause for apprehending that they would be removed at the end of their lease, to make room for men better suited for agricultural improvements; and it was a glad day on the estate when it was understood through Chalmers that not a man would be deprived of his farm, but, on the contrary, where there were embarrassment and arrears, the circumstances would be carefully looked into, and fair allowances be made for what had caused the deficiency.

It was easy and pleasant for Lockhart to preside over his estate. Chalmers was an

invaluable assistant, and no more zealous factor ever served a landlord.

Sir George had been his own factor, and thereby saved the salary of that officer; but Lockhart had a mind to take things easy, and he lost nothing by his delegated cares.

Mrs. Wilson and Sam had left their old cottage on the Girniewhins estate with right goodwill. Their new abode was beautifully situated on the borders of a stream far finer than the Heronburn. Behind towered a huge hill, clad almost to the top with natural woods, in all the wildness of nature's planting; but what was Sam's astonishment when he entered the door of his new dwelling to meet his old friend, Edmund Walker. Sir George had intimated to him that he had no further occasion for his services, and Walker had now no scruple in acting as law agent for his brother.

"Lordsake, Mr. Walker," exclaimed Sam, "but this is a land o' miracles!"

"I think it is, indeed, Sam," answered Walker, laughing; "for it has turned an old unprincipled poacher into a respectable gamekeeper. What do you think of the Game Laws now, Sam?"

"Whisht—whisht, sir; it 's nae use speakin' in that way now. Od, I can hardly believe the turn that things hae taen mysel'. But you 'll be comin' by and by to have a shot at the blackcock wi' the Laird, nae doot."

"You may swear that, Sam; and the ptarmigan, too, if we can manage to climb high enough. But," continued he, looking at the stream, "I saw a salmon take the waterfall there about an hour ago, and I am sure he must have been twenty pounds weight."

"It maks a body's mouth water to think o't," said the enthusiastic Sam; "but braver

and better than a' are our new Laird an' Miss Florence. You havena seen her yet, Mr. Walker? Weel, it's my opinion that there's no the like o' her on earth either for gudeness or beauty. Ye'll hae heard o' the marriage that is to be?"

"Yes, with young Charteris."

"Weel, I'll no' say that he's worthy o' her, for I dinna think onybody is, but I ken nae man mair worthy, an' God bless him. He saved her, you ken, from the ragin' sea."

"And you saved him and Mr. Lockhart from the winter's snow?"

"Hoot na. Od, I'll never hear the end o' that snaw business; they would hae saved themsels brawly withoot me."

"Well, Sam, they were none the worse for your guidance, at all events. But I am detaining you from seeing your new abode. I shall take a turn down the stream before returning to the house for the night."

## CHAPTER XIX.

It was admitted by all that Philip Charteris led to the altar the fairest bride ever seen in the county. They were married just before Lockhart took possession of Glenthorn. Philip bore off his prize to Switzerland, where the grand and the lovely in Nature lent their aid to complete the romance of love. Time did not fly swiftly with them. At the end of six weeks neither of them could believe that so much happiness could have been contained in so short a period. It seemed a golden age.

At last a letter from the Laird of Glenthorn arrived one morning to summon them home. Although they had been so happy, yet they saw that their presence was much missed at home, so they made up their minds to obey the summons. The letter ran thus :—

"My dear Florence,—I am now fairly settled in the house of my fathers, and I have done my best to make it a suitable home for my children. In truth, the old place is looking beautiful. I question if anything in Switzerland can surpass it; but I am impatient for you and Philip to come and settle this question, and it must remain unsettled till you come. As for Sam, he settled it the first minute he saw it. 'He did not believe the king had a place like it.' I suspect the fine stream which runs behind the house, and the fame of the place for game, had no small influence on the judgment of my honest friend and retainer. It is a great pleasure to see how comfortably his old aunt and he are accommodated. I do not believe they would exchange their cottage for the mansion house. Nick and Dick are already quite at home, and Captain is the admiration of the country side. Chalmers is of great use to me. He

is a clever, intelligent man, and seems to experience no difficulty in putting all the financial matters in order. He is, you may believe, a very different-looking man from what he was on the day when he first appeared at Bankhead. I shall not say a word about the neighbours you will meet here. You must come and judge for yourself. Sir Robert and Lady Charteris come here to-morrow, to await your return. They are both as impatient as myself for that important event. And, my dear Florence, you will find it rather important, for you must do the honours of Glenthorn. With Lady Charteris beside you, however, you have nothing to fear. After our quiet life at Bankhead, I am rather alarmed at the visiting and feastings which we must go through, but we must submit and keep up Highland hospitality, which, I dare say, we shall become accustomed to. I can flee when I like to the solitude

of the old Cottage, and the Seals' Bank," &c.

They lost little time in effecting their journey home. When they arrived at Glenthorn, there were only Lockhart and Sir Robert and Lady Charteris to receive them; and a more delightful meeting never took place at the old mansion. Perhaps there was not a happier man on the estate than Sam Burn, when next day Philip and his charming wife appeared at the cottage. Sam's coat of many colours had been discarded. He now appeared in proper keeper costume—black velvet shooting-jacket, with huge mother-of-pearl buttons, drab inferiorities, and gaiters. Philip really could not help smiling at the metamorphosis and the idea it suggested, and Sam blushed like a boy on his first assuming manly attire. His pets had been increased by the addition of a young fawn, which he had already tamed, and which

appeared to be on the best of terms with the other members of the establishment. Captain had at first shown symptoms of animosity; but Sam had contrived "to bring him to reason," as he termed it, and to make him understand that no inhospitable treatment would be submitted to.

Chalmers's happiness was not inferior to that of Sam. Misfortune and trouble had rendered prosperity doubly sweet. A wish would arise at times that his old mother might have witnessed his restoration to an honourable position, but he had the satisfaction of knowing that she had never doubted his innocence, and he had the profound conviction that she was in a better world.

And now we shall leave the chief characters in our story, in the possession of as much happiness as we believe can be experienced in this world.

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